

RE-MEMBERING THE PRESENT

The Medieval German Poet-Minstrel in Cultural
Context

DISPUTATIO

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VOLUME 6

RE-MEMBERING THE PRESENT

The Medieval German Poet-Minstrel in Cultural Context

by

Maria Dobozy



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Se non è vero, è ben trovato

For Alan McGill Smith

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Foreword

This book is a part of a lengthy reception process, the process of coming to understand the beauty of medieval literature and the pleasure it gave to people long ago. The questions I ask will possibly never be answered definitively but they must be considered: who were the composer-poet-singers who sang and recited romances, lyric songs, epics, political and gnomic songs? What aesthetic strategies guided their performances? How did audiences experience them? In asking about performance and reception of literature, I inquire not so much about the extant texts, but more about the entire context of performance art. I focus, therefore, on the ubiquitous performers who brought the pleasures of music, jesting, song, and story to spellbound audiences. Their significance cannot be overstated for they more than any other group created and nurtured the performing arts in the Middle Ages.

The term minstrel subsumes a multifarious group of entertainers. As marginals and ministers to others, they used their voice for their art and for the delectation of audiences but recorded little of their own lives. Consequently, documentation about minstrels is sparse and has to be sought in archives and libraries. I could not have completed this study without the help of librarians and archivists in Freiburg, Greifswald, Innsbruck, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart, Vienna, and elsewhere. Several grants supported my work. A one-year Mellon Post-doctoral Grant from Boston University gave me time for the initial research on dance and performance theory, a University Research Grant from the University of Utah provided funds for a summer in German libraries, a one-semester Residence Research Fellowship at the Medieval Institute at the University of Notre Dame allowed me to study medieval Vienna, and a one-semester Faculty Fellow Research Award from the University of Utah allowed me to write the final chapters.

As I forged into the unknown territory of diverse documents, I benefited enormously from the encouragement and critical suggestions of a great many historians, art historians, literary scholars, musicologists, and classicists. I owe

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Previously Published Material

Some parts have appeared as articles over the years. The section on Kelin was published as 'Creating Credibility and Truth through Performance: Kelin's encomium', in *The Stranger in Medieval Society*, ed. by F. R. P. Akehurst and Stephanie Cain Van D'Elden, *Medieval Cultures*, 12 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1997), pp. 92–103. The thesis on Heinrich von Veldeke as minstrel and historian is found in 'The Role of the Chronicler, the Poet and the Minstrel in Heinrich von Veldekes *Eneide*', *Mediaevistik. Internationale Zeitschrift für inter-disziplinäre Mittelalterforschung*, 2 (1989), 81–96. Parts of the chapter on gift-giving have appeared in German as 'Beschenkungs politik und die Erschaffung von Ruhm am Beispiel der fahrenden Sänger', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 26 (1992), 353–67.

Abbreviations

ATB	Altdeutsche Textbibliothek
Bartsch-Golther	<i>Deutsche Liederdichter des zwölften bis vierzehnten Jahrhunderts</i> , ed. by Karl Bartsch and Wolfgang Golther (Berlin: Behr's Verlag, 1901).
<i>Beiträge</i>	<i>Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur</i>
DeBoor/Newald	<i>Geschichte der deutschen Literatur. Die deutsche Literatur im späten Mittelalter 1250–1370</i> , ed. by Ingeborg Glier (Munich: Beck, 1987), III/2.
de Boer	'Extract Concerning Minstrels from the Accountbooks of Bavaria–Holland, the Straubing Court', ed. by Dick E. H. de Boer, unpublished.
Diefenbach	<i>Glossarium Latino-Germanicum mediae et infimae Aetatis</i> , ed. by Laurentius Diefenbach (Frankfurt am Main: Baer, 1857).
<i>DVjs</i>	<i>Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte</i>
GAG	Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik
<i>GRM</i>	<i>Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift</i>
Hartzheim	<i>Concilia Germaniae</i> , ed. by P. Josephus Hartzheim and Cl. Joannes Fridericus Schannat, 6 vols (Cologne: Krakamp, 1759–61).
<i>HMS</i>	<i>Minnesinger: Deutsche Liederdichter des zwölften, drei-</i>

- zehnten und vierzehnten Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Friedrich H. von der Hagen, 5 vols (1838; Aalen: Zello, 1962). References to specific poems are given by volume, page: tone, and strophe thus: III, p. 22: II, 4 or when no numbering of tones is present: II, p. 230: 14.
- HRG* *Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, ed. by Adalbert Erler and Ekkehard Kaufmann (Berlin: Schmidt, 1971–99).
- IASL* *Internationales Archiv für die Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur*
- JEGP* *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*
- KLD* *Deutsche Liederdichter des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Carl von Kraus, 2 vols (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1952). References to specific poems are cited by vol.: tone (if given), strophe, and page thus: I: I, 2, p. 185.
- Lachmann Refers to Lachmann's number system for Walther von der Vogelweide's poetry and is used by most editors as a standard identifying marker in addition to their own numbering of strophes.
- Mansi *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. by Johannes Dominicus Mansi (Graz: Akademischer Druck, 1961).
- MGH *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*
- PL *Patrologiae cursus completus* (Series Latina), ed. by Jacques Paul Migne, 221 vols (Paris: Migne, 1844–64).
- VL* *Deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, 11 vols (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1978–2000).
- ZfdA* *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*
- ZfdPh* *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*

Illustrations

Cover: Lutenist and fiddler, Fresco fragment, Castle Runkelstein near Bolzano, Italy, c. 1390–1400, reproduced by permission of the Institut für Realienkunde, Austrian Academy of Sciences.

Fig. 1. A woman in bed with a man. The vielle identifies him as a minstrel, from the *Sachsenspiegel*, 1358–62, Cod. Guelf. 3.1 Aug. 2, fol. 12^r, Landrecht I, 5. Reproduced by permission of the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Germany (p. 45).

Fig. 2. Tower musician, Initial I from a Psalter, c. 1200–50, cod. 66, fol. 47^v, Stiftsbibliothek Heiligenkreuz, reproduced by permission of the Institut für Realienkunde, Austrian Academy of Sciences (p. 144).

Fig. 3. Fiddler, Initial I from the *Magnum legendarium austriacum*, c. 1200–1300, cod. 24, fol. 114^r, Stiftsbibliothek Zwettl, reproduced by permission of the Institut für Realienkunde, Austrian Academy of Sciences (p. 224).

Fig. 4. Woman reading, man playing a lute, from a miscellany, c. 1300–1400, cod. 174, fol. 33^v, Vienna, reproduced by permission of the Austrian National Library (p. 296).

Part I

Living in the Interstices: The Performer

man hôte singen unde sagen
unt aller hande seitenspil
unt ander kurzewile vil.
sich huop bûhurt unde tanz,
getriwelichen vröude ganz,
daz man unz an den suontac
wol dâ von sagen mac.

Konrad von Stoffeln

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Identity in Diversity

The ubiquitous minstrels were essential to the literary and cultural life of the Middle Ages. As poet-singer-composer-musicians they created, adapted and performed literary, musical and theatrical entertainments. As travellers they were polyglots who served their patrons as reliable messengers and informants. Although branded as pariah, they were capable of functioning politically and artistically in the interstices of society. By means of their varied performances, minstrels transmitted many of the traditions and values of society. But they were also capable of innovation—of restructuring their listeners' memory of the past and reinterpreting their impression of the present. Thus minstrels may have contributed to the stability of the power structure at court or in city, but they may have been just as effective in undermining and changing it. Whether we consider the historical documents or the literary evidence, performers remain a potential catalyst of change.

The minstrel's performative role in the Middle Ages signals the significant transformation in the creation and reception of literature since then. Two examples illustrate a fundamental difference in the way literature is experienced and defined today. The first story, 'Der Welt Lohn', by the poet-minstrel Konrad von Würzburg opens with the central character, an exemplary knight, seated in a cozy room all day reading a courtly romance. Reading to oneself—a perfectly ordinary activity to us—is a truly remarkable development in the history of literary reception because it is an unmistakable description of someone reading a vernacular literary text alone for

pleasure.¹ In the Middle Ages, at least between the years 1170–1400, literature was enjoyed primarily in public performance. Reading silently for pleasure is mentioned seldom although it became an increasingly frequent phenomenon over time.² Instead, listening to performance of songs and stories of all kinds was a customary occurrence wherever minstrels attracted an audience. For example, when Konrad von Stoffeln describes a typical courtly feast—one of the frequent, special opportunities for elaborate entertainments—he assures his audience that all the entertainment anyone could wish for was supplied (by minstrels), including the performance of narrative and lyric poetry: ‘You could hear singing and storytelling, many stringed instruments, and more entertainment still; they held a *mêlée* and a dance for complete merry-making that people can positively talk about until Judgment Day’ (c. 1250).³ Konrad von Stoffeln’s reference to *singen unde sagen* can refer to all types of poetry. Included are not only genres certain to have originally been sung, like oral poems (epics) and *Minnesang*, but also narrative literature like short stories and farces, didactic tales, and most significantly, the lengthier, chivalric romances that were recited or read aloud. They all point to the essential role of performance and, therefore, of the performer.

To be sure, the details of melody, styles of singing or recitation, the stock of gestures and movements, and the types of musical accompaniment, i.e. the several variable elements of medieval performance practice, are not available to us. Nevertheless, these two scenes, the private reading and the feast description, point out how fundamentally different our contemporary concepts and expectations are concerning what constitutes performance art. That medieval literature is performance based, that it was disseminated and received to a great extent through performances both visually and aurally and not directly by means of texts is now accepted, but only after more than a hundred fifty years of discussion beginning with Karl

¹ Manfred Scholz had already noted twenty years ago the discrepancy between the medieval and modern modes of literary reception in his study of reading, *Hören und Lesen. Studien zur primären Rezeption der Literatur im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1980), p. 24. Dennis Green in his thorough study on reception by reading and hearing criticizes Scholz for ignoring many of the signs of aural reception in twelfth- and thirteenth-century texts and rejects his claim that references by a narrator to listeners is meant metaphorically, *Medieval Listening and Reading: The Primary Reception of German Literature 800–1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) pp. 72, 107–10. Green also concurs that although Konrad von Würzburg’s reference to reading is not isolated, it is far more seldom than reception by hearing, p. 111.

² Many have criticized the concept of a simple dichotomy between the written and the oral. See Dennis Green for a summary of this discussion and a bibliography, especially pp. 64–66, 109.

³ Konrad von Stoffeln, *Gauriel von Muntabel. Eine höfische Erzählung aus dem 13. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Ferdinand Khull (1885; Osnabrück: Zeller, 1969), ll. 4136–40. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

Lachmann in 1833.⁴ Michel Zink has put it perhaps most succinctly: ‘La littérature médiévale est presque exclusivement chantée ou récitée. Elle n’existe qu’en performance. Elle relève donc tout entière de la mise en spectacle et de l’expression dramatique’.⁵ And Jan-Dirk Müller has been able to state the general acceptance of Zink’s claim: ‘In jüngeren Forschungen hat sich die Einsicht durchgesetzt, daß die volkssprachliche Literatur des Mittelalters und noch der Frühen Neuzeit weniger in der Schrift als in der “Aufführung” (performance) lebt.’⁶

⁴ Those who stress the significance of performance for almost all of medieval literature and especially epics also note the complexity in the gradual transition from an oral society with oral poetic forms to a literate society still heavily indebted to performance for its reception of written forms. Among the many in this camp are Rudolf Flotzinger, ‘Musik’, in *Österreich im Hochmittelalter (907 bis 1246)* ed. by M. Erich Zöllner (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1991), pp. 561–75; Karl Bertau, ‘Epenrezitation im deutschen Mittelalter’, *Etudes Germaniques*, 20 (1965), 1–17; Paul Zumthor, *Oral Poetry. An Introduction*, trans. by Kathryn Murphy-Judy, *Theory and History of Literature*, 70 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990); Volker Mertens, ‘Tagelieder singen. Ein hermeneutisches Experiment’, *Wolfram Studien*, 17 (2002), 276–93; ‘Aufführung’ und ‘Schrift’ im Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit, ed. by Jan-Dirk Müller (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996); and Horst Wenzel, ‘Die Stimme und die Schrift: Autoritätskonstitution im Medienwechsel von der Mündlichkeit zur Schriftlichkeit’, in *The Construction of Textual Authority in German Literature of the Medieval and Early Modern Periods*, ed. by James Poag (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 49–74. Already in 1963 Ewald Jammers had proposed a more radical thesis, that courtly romances, even those written in rhymed couplets were sung, *Ausgewählte Melodien des Minnesangs. Einführung, Erläuterung und Übertragung* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1963), pp. 5–9. In contrast, Nigel Palmer ‘Zur Vortragsweise der Wien-Münchener Evangelienübersetzung’, *ZfDA*, 114 (1985), 95–118, has argued against this view claiming poetic rhythm and structure a hindrance to any type of singing, but he is in the minority. Contemporary performers like Eberhard Kummer maintain that if a text is accompanied with an instrument, the precise form of presentation, i.e. whether sung or recited, is secondary (personal communication). The only problem with most of these discussions with the exception of a few studies since 1994 is that they are still too narrow in their concept of performance and limit their discussion frequently to *Minnesang*. Rarely have they addressed the impact of body movement and visual effects that underlie all performance modes and styles. Yet some progress has been made. Walter Haug had earlier pointed out the complexity of the transformation from performance type reception to reception through reading in ‘Die Verwandlung des Körpers zwischen “Aufführung und Schrift”’, in *Aufführung*, ed. by Jan-Dirk Müller, pp. 190–204. And in his recent article, Mertens finally no longer needs to argue for a separate performative existence of dawn songs (‘Tagelieder’, p. 276).

⁵ Michel Zink, *Le Moyen âge. Littérature française* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1990), p. 92.

⁶ Jan-Dirk Müller, ‘Vorbemerkung’ in *Aufführung*, ed. by Jan-Dirk Müller, p. xi. He further states that all the sensory elements of performance—the gestures, body comportment, sounds, colours—can never be completely transmitted in writing; they cannot be re-presented in symbols, p. xi. This means that the experience of a performance, a theatrical event cannot

Can we still read medieval literature the same way once we know that our access to it is so completely different? Hardly. This insight has several ramifications for our understanding of medieval literature and leads investigation in a new direction. Or as Mertens phrased it: '[...] allein die Berücksichtigung des Phänomens "Aufführung" als Dimension eröffnet neue Verständnismöglichkeiten.'⁷ First of all, this insight forces us to accept the need for a historical approach to the medieval period and its arts. Second, medieval cultural expectations and concepts about the performing arts cannot be discussed using our own contemporary frame and vocabulary.⁸ Some medieval concepts have long vanished or been reinterpreted, prohibiting us from understanding their place in the consciousness of an age so distant from us. We simply divide up the cultural world differently. For us, performance is a completely separate category from literature. To be sure, poetry readings are held and plays produced on stage, but the texts are considered primary even by actors.⁹ In contrast,

be analyzed like a text. However, Thomas Cramer has recently taken quite the opposite view, that performance is only one constitutive element and not at all the essential one for fully understanding *Minnesang*. Further, he assumes a readership of aesthetes because these poems require more attention, time and analytical energy than is possible when merely hearing them. *Waz hilfet âne sinne kunst? Lyrik im 13. Jahrhundert: Studien zu ihrer Ästhetik*, *Philologische Studien und Quellen*, 148 (Berlin: Schmidt, 1998), pp. 7–8. Nevertheless, Walter J. Ong's study of memory and aural capacity in oral cultures and also contemporary performers of medieval texts would prove him wrong. See Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Methuen, 1982).

⁷ Mertens, 'Tagelieder', p. 280; Helmut Tervooren has not limited himself to *Minnesang* but sought to make clear that medieval songs, including *Spruchdichtung* leave us with serious interpretative difficulties because they are mediated by a text unless we postulate a performance situation, 'Die "Aufführung" als Interpretament mittelhochdeutscher Lyrik', in *'Aufführung' und 'Schrift' im Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. by Jan-Dirk Müller (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996), pp. 48–66, (p. 59).

⁸ For a discussion of the inadequacy of our modern vocabulary for medieval concepts see Hans Helmut Christmann who warns that concepts must be defined within the context and use of their own period, 'Sprachwissenschaft und Mediävistik', in *Zusammenhänge, Einflüsse, Wirkungen. Kongressakten zum ersten Symposium des Mediävistenverbandes in Tübingen, 1984*, ed. by Joerg O. Fichte, Karl Heinz Göller, Bernhard Schimmelpfennig (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986), pp. 1–26, (pp. 6–7). He also criticizes LeGoff and Duby for claiming that if a term does not exist in medieval sources, then the concept also is lacking. It is more likely that we do not recognize the concept in its medieval lexical guise, p. 12.

⁹ Many scholars and stage directors accept the primacy of the text even in stage productions as Joseph Bensman has stated, 'I recognize that some non-performing arts, poetry, for instance, may be best appreciated when read aloud or performed before an audience, whereas the play can be enjoyed and, in some cases, make more sense read than performed. The literary value of a play may be at the expense of its performance value, thus accentuating the differences in the criteria for evaluating the performing arts as opposed to other art forms', 'Introduction: The Phenomenology and Sociology of the Performing Arts' in *Performers and*

medieval audiences experienced literary works the way we experience music—in performance—and not at home reading a score. Even medieval patrons of manuscripts experienced literature in much the same way. Third, it is necessary to move away from our contemporary conceptions and to study literature within its own cultural context—as a performing art.¹⁰ Since medieval literature existed primarily in the materiality of the performance, the performer was the person foremost in control of its reception. (In comparison, patrons played a lesser role.)

Consequently, to study the social cultural context of medieval literature means to seek the links between medieval performers, their performance conventions, and the extant literary works. These three components have not yet been considered together. Such a comprehensive approach suggested here necessarily displaces the text from the centre of discussion¹¹ and replaces it with the performer. And no one has yet studied the minstrels in Germany in any detail with respect to their performative contribution for want of an appropriate theory, but we now have the benefit of

Performances: The Social Organization of Artistic Work, ed. by J. Kamerman (South Hadley: J. F. Bergin, 1983), pp. 1–38, (p. 2). W. B. Worthen, following Richard Schechner and Victor Turner, has also questioned this model, ‘Drama, Performativity, and Performance’, *PMLA*, 113 (1998), 1093–1107 (p. 1094).

¹⁰ There is still much resistance to this idea. Ulrich Müller, one of the first to recognize the importance of performance for the reception of literature in the Middle Ages in the 1980s, has been working closely with performers to create performances of medieval strophic narratives for modern audiences in an effort to understand the performative nature of these texts. See the first outlines of his attempts, ‘Überlegungen und Versuchen zur Melodie des *Nibelungenliedes*, zur Kürenberger-Strophe und zur sog. “Elegie” Walthers von der Vogelweide’, in *Zur gesellschaftlichen Funktionalität mittelalterlicher deutscher Literatur*, Deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters, 1 (Greifswald: Ernst Moritz Arndt Universität, 1984), pp. 27–41. He also discusses more recent production projects, in which he points out the resistance of scholars in ‘Aufführungsversuche zur mittelhochdeutschen Sangvers-Epik: “Titurel”, “Wartburgkrieg”, “Winsbecke”—und “Parzival”. Ein Erfahrungsbericht über die Zusammenarbeit mit den Musikern Reinhold Wiedenmann und Osvaldo Parisi’, in *Von wyßheit würt der mensch geert [...] Festschrift für Manfred Lemmer zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Ingrid Kühn and Gotthard Lerchner (Bern: Lang, 1993), pp. 87–103. Müller’s experiments have shown that scholars with their preconceived ideas unfortunately tend to reject performances whereas general audiences enjoy them tremendously: ‘Das Hauptproblem gegenüber einem philologischen Publikum war und ist es immer, die unreflektierte, aber umso mehr festgewurzelte Meinung zu überwinden, Wolframs “Titurel” als Lesetext (und höchstens im äußersten Fall als auch “sprechbaren” Text) zu kategorisieren’ (p. 94).

¹¹ Jan-Dirk Müller has stated emphatically that scholars have finally recognized that their fixation on the text has caused them to ignore the materiality of performance. Now literary historians are redefining the concept of text because they recognize that the sensory elements of performance—gestures, body comportment, sounds, colours, etc.—cannot be represented in written symbols. The result is that the experience of a performance cannot be analyzed like a text (‘Vorbemerkung’, in *Aufführung*, p. xiv).

performance theory as a guide to what constitutes a successful performance.¹² With this framework it is then possible to describe the goals of performers and the possible ways performances were constructed even though I do not attempt to reconstruct any. I do, however, rely on the insights and experience of performers who attempt to do so.

Contemporary performers, both music groups and individuals, demonstrate the variety of ways medieval songs and narratives could have been performed, by varying their use of metre, melody, rhythm, and instrumentation. Eberhard Kummer performs Middle High German strophic songs and epics, often with their original melodies, accompanying himself with a harp or hurdy-gurdy.¹³ Linda Marie Zaerr recites Middle English romances in rhymed couplets and tail-rhymed stanzas following the metre but without rigidly fixing stresses or beats. She has performed these narratives for the last twenty years sometimes with and sometimes without instrumental accompaniment. When used, the instrumental voice serves to give the text contour but no melodies exist that might have accompanied romances.¹⁴ Hence these and other modern performers explore the potential flexibility and variability of medieval performance practice. The medieval poet-singer Michael Beheim (c. 1416–74) confirms this flexibility in the often-cited instruction to his *Buch von den*

¹² Some of the most innovative theorists who also have years of performance experience with many different cultural models are Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese. *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology. The Secret Art of the Performer*, ed. by Richard Gough, trans. by Richard Fowler (New York: Routledge, 1991); Erik Exe Christoffersen, *The Actor's Way*, trans. by Richard Fowler (New York: Routledge, 1993); David Cole, *The Theatrical Event. A Mythos, A Vocabulary, A Perspective* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1975); Dario Fo, *The Tricks of the Trade*, ed. by Stuart Hood, trans. by Joe Farrell (New York: Routledge, 1987); Richard Schechner and Victor Turner have written several books on performance theory (see bibliography). I rely heavily on their work here and in subsequent chapters.

¹³ I draw on the recordings of medieval and early modern German songs and epics performed by Eberhard Kummer, *Das Nibelungenlied* (Video), Vienna Video film/Mathias Praml, 1988; *Das Nibelungenlied, Der von Kurenberg, Walther von der Vogelweide*. (2LPs), Koch-Records, PAN 150005/6, 1983; *Neidhart von Reuenthal. Lieder und Reigen des Mittelalters* (LP), Koch-Records, FA 117.001, 1985; *Das Buch von den Wienern aufgeschrieben von Michel Beheim* (CD), Preiser Records, CD 90206, 1995.

¹⁴ The performance of romances is especially interesting because so many additional theatrical problems need to be solved. Best known for her performances of Middle English romance and other narratives is Linda Marie Zaerr. See her videos: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Video), TEAMS and the Chaucer Studio, 2002; *The Weddyng of Sir Gawen and Dame Ragnel*. (Video), TEAMS and the Chaucer Studio, 1999. Margaret Switten and Robert Eisenstein have produced a video of a French romance by Jean Renart, *The Romance of the Rose, or of Guillaume de Dole* (Video), National Endowment for the Humanities and Mount Holyoke College, 1993. This romance poses special challenges because the narrative is interspersed with lyric—songs of love, folk songs, and minstrel songs.

Wienern (1462–65, performed by Kummer), that it may either be sung or recited. Thus it is likely that even earlier medieval artists knowingly left much open to individual style, ability, and, above all, improvisation.

A chief difficulty encountered by performers and scholars alike is the need to establish the complex relationship between verse and music for each case. Some scholars refer to the many possible combinations of alliterative accent, foot metre, syllabic stress and the influence of rhyme and even natural prose metre as a matrix of possibilities. Empirical performance has revealed an important distinction: regularity of metre is connected to text whereas performance is characterized by multiple dimensions.¹⁵ Performers like Kummer (in his *Nibelungenlied* rendition) and Zaerr (in her *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*) have demonstrated the meaningful use of simultaneous rhythmic patterns when musical accompaniment is added. Thus when contemporary performers reconstruct a medieval piece, they offer us an ‘embodiment of theoretical possibilities’. As Zaerr states, ‘in terms of textual analysis, options and connections within a text become evident in performance which are more difficult to perceive in the written text alone’. In addition ‘a performer’s impulses regarding how to maintain an audience’s involvement can expand the theoretical parameters to include options that had not been considered’.¹⁶ The lesson here is that we cannot fully understand the relationship of text to melody, and of text to recitation and singing, until the combinations in the matrix are tried out empirically by performers. The complex set of components that produce a performance consists of the audience, the performer using voice, gesture and the entire body, also the time and location of the performance, the media used (text, melody, instruments), costuming and possibly properties. Hence my work here considers music only one of these components that a performer must bring together for a successful production. Since this experimental process is so complex, it must be left to the performers themselves.¹⁷

¹⁵ This point has been convincingly presented by Seymour Chatman and is further discussed by Linda Marie Zaerr, ‘A Nonsynchronous Model for the Performance of the Middle English Tail-Rhyme Stanza with Vielle’. *Versification: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Literary Prosody*, 2 (29 May 1998), pp. 1–16.
<http://sizcol.u_shizuoka_ken.ac.jp/versif/NonsynchModel.html>.

¹⁶ Zaerr, ‘Nonsynchronous Model’, pp. 4–5. Zaerr’s experience thus directly contradicts Cramer’s assumption that hearing limits comprehension, ‘*Waz hilfet*’, p. 8.

¹⁷ I do not discount the important work of scholars on prosody and the relationship of verse and music. Burkhard Kippenberg’s book is still excellent, *Der Rhythmus im Minnesang. Eine Kritik der literar- und musikhistorischen Forschung mit einer Übersicht über die musikalischen Quellen*, Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen, 3 (Munich: Beck, 1962). I have learned a great deal from discussions with Kummer, Zaerr, and Switten concerning their re-creations of possible medieval performances for a modern audience. Actual performance yields information that can be gathered no other way. See also several articles in the bibliography by Switten and Zaerr based on their performance experiences.

As modern performers experiment with several approaches to performing medieval works, research by ethnomusicologists reveals an even greater spectrum of possibilities. If we look only at one genre, oral epic poetry, in several cultures where its performance has survived, the rich variety of performance practice far exceeds anyone's imagination. All epics potentially have a melodic line, beats or metre, and rhythm of some sort, and performers follow, embellish or ignore any or all of these elements. They may perform with or without an instrument, perhaps eschewing even a drone. John Stevens, when responding to performances from a great many oral traditions, stressed the enlightening experience 'of hearing, and often seeing in action, the narrative musics of so many different cultures. In every case the gap between what has been performed and what could conceivably be transmitted by even the most sophisticated notation is unimaginably huge. The written record is a barren thing'.¹⁸

In order to understand the concerns of medieval performers and their construction of performances, we need certainly to look at living traditions as ethnomusicologists have done, and also to try out different strategies in actual performance as contemporary performers have done. Live performance allows us to focus on the essential component that most musicological and literary studies play down: the performer's physical presence and body movement. Thus it is necessary also to take advantage of performance theory as formulated by theatre artists not simply because they, too, have conducted ethnographic studies, but because they are concerned with the physical stage-presence of the performer who is able to convey information and engage an audience by means of the body. Thus performance theory addresses what has been given inadequate attention thus far: audience reception of a performance depends on a physical presence uniting the auditory with the visual senses, thereby engaging the emotions. Therefore, by combining the insights of performance theory with an inquiry into the social cultural context in which medieval performers worked, I postulate a dynamics of performance customs that have the potential to alter the way both performers and spectators perceive their world.

The goal of this book then is to delve into all three components of performance art: the performers, the complexity of their performance practice, and finally, the extant literary artifacts produced within and dependent upon this cultural and performative context. Based on these three components the following book is divided into two parts. The first half of the book 'Living in the Interstices' is devoted to the performers, the key figures in the creation, dissemination and reception process. Minstrels often created and disseminated poetic works of their own and also transmitted the works of others in their performances. A few poets of noble status for whom performance cannot be attested, certainly supplied some of this material and

¹⁸ John Stevens, 'Reflections on the Music of Medieval Narrative Poetry', in *The Oral Epic: Performance and Music*, ed. by Karl Reichl, Intercultural Music Studies, 12 (Berlin: Wissenschaft und Bildung, 2000), pp. 233–48 (p. 246).

must, therefore, be considered contributors to performance art (see section on Medieval Performers below).

Building on disparate sources from *c.* 1170–1400, including chronicles, account books, customary laws, ecclesiastical records, and the writings of moral theologians and itinerant preachers, this social history explores the parameters of the minstrels' social existence—their status, their mobility within the interstices of society, their multiple skills, varied working conditions, the obstacles they overcame, and the stigma they endured. The fact that they disseminated narrative and song and were welcomed everywhere brought favour and suspicion upon them at the same time. For this reason it is necessary to examine the range of attitudes towards minstrels that contributed to their audience's perception and, therefore, affected the reception of their person and performance. Because of their inherent lack of specialization, minstrels are difficult to characterize uniformly. Nevertheless, the social circumstances of performers are important because these entertainers influenced the creation, dissemination, and interpretation of the medieval poetic *oeuvre*.

I examine normative society's stereotyping of performers as reiterated in authoritative texts of Church canons and secular law books, and in the writings of moral theologians. These documents are important less for describing what performers actually did than for creating an image. They created an image of transgression that could be readily applied to anyone thought guilty of immoral conduct. If performers were considered so disreputable in official writings, how did this image influence their activities? What they did and how they lived depended on or was guided at least in part by the requirements and goals of a life dedicated to performance. From the perspective of performance theory, the trade itself gives performers the experience of liminality; they project many different personas and those shifting personas are experienced by performers not as a boundary, but rather as an in-between sphere, a limen or threshold which allows identities and social norms to be experimented with and transformed. To determine how they transform everyday experience, I turn to the fundamental performative principles of physical movement and gesture defined by performance anthropology. As I compare the bigger than life physical movement and liminal behaviour of performers with the theologians' principles of moderation and moral conduct, it becomes clear that thespian behaviour is incompatible with those principles. The next step is to conclude with a description of the jobs these people were especially suited for because of their performance skills. The types of jobs and terms of employment accepted by minstrels can be culled from account books and other records of their wages and multifarious jobs that allowed them to perform. In sum, Part I is an inquiry into the social and cultural context of medieval minstrels' lives that played a determining role in their creative work.

Part II, 'Appealing to the Audience', investigates the affective impact of performance and asks how poet-minstrels attract and influence their audiences. The answer builds on the social cultural context that guides my reading of the extant literary artifacts. These include several narratives and the encomiastic and political

verses that present evidence of the goals and strategies of poet-minstrels. It is important to examine specifically the way in which the performer constructs a stage for himself, claims credibility, and undertakes to transform the consciousness of his audience. I argue for the minstrel's potential power and ability to formulate what is remembered from the past, to forge reputations for individuals, and to shape the attitudes of their audiences; they can shape the way audiences perceive their contemporary world and their future. Evidence for this comes from the narrator in Heinrich von Veldeke's *Eneit* who can be shown to associate himself with all performers and then to define them all as guardians and disseminators of historical and cultural information and as evaluators of rulers, claiming that they can make or break a reputation.¹⁹ If these functions were indeed accepted by itinerant poet-performers like the *Spruchdichter*, many of who were of low status, their verses will speak to this issue, and they do. In their political and gnomic songs they create the credibility necessary for producing *fama* by redefining concepts like *ère* ('public prestige') and consequently their own moral status. Turning to additional romances, I then offer evidence that the hosts set up reciprocal agreements with minstrels when they reward them publicly so that they will go out and fulfil their historiographic and encomiastic mission to the benefit of the host. In a further examination of a selection of gnomic and encomiastic verses, I analyze songs that exemplify the mechanisms for soliciting and carrying out the commissions, and also the techniques for influencing audience opinion. Their appeal to audiences functioned on two levels. The minstrel's most important goal was to provide entertainment and influence opinion. At the same time minstrels used their performance to create a network for themselves that enabled them to exchange information with other performers in order to locate and keep track of receptive and generous audiences and patrons. Thus this second half of the study considers literary evidence from romances, short narratives (*maere*) and the gnomic and political-praise verses of the *Spruchdichter* to postulate a dynamics of performance governed by performer-audience interaction within the social cultural parameters outlined in part one. Before elaborating on the details of the chapters, however, it is necessary to define what is meant by performance, and who is included in the category of performer.

¹⁹ Andrew Taylor has found that in England a number of political poems by unidentified singers (*gestours*) situated within the milieu of the noble courts perform these very functions of praising and blaming lords for their triumphs and failures. Unfortunately, no melodies have been found, 'Songs of Praise and Blame and the Repertoire of the Gestour', in *The Entertainer in Medieval and Traditional Culture: A Symposium*, ed. by Flemming G. Anderson, Thomas Pettitt, and Reinhold Schröder (Odense: Odense University Press, 1997), pp. 47–72 (pp. 61, 63).

Performance

When asked to define performance, the well-known theatre director, Jerzy Grotowski, said that although the number of definitions is practically unlimited, only a performer and an audience are indispensable.²⁰ Although stating the obvious, this most rudimentary definition needs to be mentioned because it lets us recognize almost any performance regardless of cultural context. Later, in Chapter 3 I present a much expanded definition taking into account the complexity of performance theory. But for now I focus on the interdependence of Grotowski's two essential elements, the performer and spectator. For a performance to occur, spectators need not be physically present. A person may perform before an imagined audience as is often done in rehearsal. Hence the performer is central. Nevertheless, the audience is crucial. A performance before an actual assemblage of spectators achieves the distinct effect we recognize as performance: the performer establishes that electrifying interaction between himself and an audience that gives performance its tension and finality.

Thus the second universal characteristic of performance is its finality and is achieved only when an audience is physically present. Like life, if a mistake is made, it cannot be redone. The show cannot be halted to make corrections. Its forward movement makes each action before an audience final. Every live performance is, therefore, unique. After a performance has happened, it is lost forever and cannot be recaptured. For its success, every performance depends totally on the performer at every moment. Whatever the medium, the performer's task is to produce an affective reaction in the audience by his very presence. This fact makes the performer essential, regardless of the preparations and contributions of others. For this reason the performer is the focus of this study. Having listed the universals—performer, spectator and the unrepeatability of performance—I need now build on this definition because the performing arts are complex and have changed over the centuries. Some of the changes directly illuminate the differences between the Middle Ages and our own.

Of the great number of cultural, conceptual, and technological changes and innovations between the medieval and modern periods that directly influenced performance and literature, I focus on but a few of the conceptual developments. These are concepts that confront our contemporary premises, concepts we do not share with the past. And so they must be defined as they are used within their own period.

What we know of performance from studies of early cultures, including Greek and pre-Christian Roman, and of contemporary cultures around the world is that our own unique European development has separated conceptually three once

²⁰ Jerzy Grotowski, 'The Theatre's New Testament', in *Ritual, Play, and Performance. Readings in the Social Sciences/Theatre*, ed. by Richard Schechner and Mady Schuman (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), pp. 180–95 (183).

undifferentiated elements: intentionally arranged sounds, movement, and language. Early cultures considered all three elements together as a single conceptual entity. For the Greeks, who called it *mousiké*, the term subsumed all the performance arts of the time (i.e. all the activities that the muses presided over).²¹ The muse Terpsichore, for example, presided over the carole, a choral song sung to accompany a dance, and Melpomene over tragedy and the lyre. Hence instrumental music and song were not separated from tragic or comic theatre. From the point of view of other cultures, what we do today in Western society is very strange indeed when we expect people to come into a hall, sit down silently in the dark, and listen to three hours of strictly orchestral music composed by Beethoven or Mahler.

This conceptual separation, begun in early Christian times and completed by the beginning of the nineteenth century, forces us to re-examine our premises about medieval literature and, therefore, to study it in the broader context of performing arts. In much of the world today and in times past, poetic language was very much a performative medium, and if performance or 'music' included instruments, language, and dance as an undifferentiated entity, we must consider that medieval performance practice of a secular nature was rich and varied because it maintained the custom of combining media: lyrics and melodies were intended to be sung, listened and danced to, and the performer was intended to be seen. Although the musical practices of the medieval Church incubated the conceptual divisions now so obvious to us, this change from a relative unity to complete compartmentalization of words, music and movement took place at different speeds in different parts of society—a fact that makes the social history of minstrels and their performance practice difficult to write. The popular, secular performances of vernacular songs and narratives built on this very unity to such an extent that performers enjoyed the freedom to vary extensively the application and re-combination of these media.

Another modern conventional distinction lacking in the beginning of our period is the distinction between serious and popular culture. As long as bear-baiting and cock-fighting were popular with the same audiences as performances of *Minnesang*, namely at courtly entertainments, few people distinguished conceptually between these events in aesthetic terms. The earliest indication that poets were attempting to

²¹ Music sociologists like Kurt Blaukopf have demonstrated that only our Western society separates conceptually music from words and from movement like dance. Many cultures do not behave in this manner, *Musik im Wandel der Gesellschaft. Grundzüge der Musiksoziologie*, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1996), especially pp. 4–8. Jan-Dirk Müller has summarized this thesis partially as follows: 'Anders als in der Moderne haben sich spezifisch theatralische Gattungen wie das Drama noch nicht durchweg gegenüber dominant schriftgebundenen Gattungen wie Roman, Erzählungen, Lyrik o. ä. ausdifferenziert. Vielmehr ist literarische Rezeption in der Regel "Kommunikation unter körperlich Anwesenden"'. (Vorbemerkung, in *Aufführung*, p. xi). John Stevens shares this view in *Words and Music in the Middle Ages. Song, Narrative, Dance and Drama, 1050–1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 375–80.

make a distinction in our sense between what is entertainment for the general populace and serious art worthy of performance before a discerning audience, appears in Konrad von Würzburg's 'Klage der Kunst' (c. 1265). Our concept of art, especially the modern division into serious and popular art has changed our aesthetic expectations so fundamentally that it is very difficult for us to perceive as integrated units what often appear inconsistent, fragmented, or repetitious.²²

Instead of the modern serious–popular distinction, medieval culture differentiated between secular and liturgical. Performance occurred in both liturgical and secular spheres but was determined by style, media involved, class of performers (clergy vs. minstrel), and specific audience expectations. In liturgical contexts performances were governed by strictly regulated use of melody, voice, and ritual movement, and forbade most instrumental music, whereas secular entertainments and performances were being produced with much greater latitude. Dancing, singing and playing of instruments were combined freely, and not limited to special spaces and circumstances. As liturgical music came to be based more and more on a musical and theological education, its complexity gradually limited its accessibility to the lay public. This caused the secular–liturgical dichotomy, originally a functional distinction, to become, gradually, the foundation of an educated–uneducated or folk dichotomy.

In their secular performances minstrels were free to create ever new combinations of words, music and dance. Performative events thus varied from several players in a troupe to single performers. In both of these contexts entertainers could sing or recite accompanied by instrument or not; they could lead a dance with either song or instrument, or both. In addition, each region probably had its own performance conventions for each genre and social gathering.²³ The songs and melodies of Neidhart von Reuenthal are examples of this mixture of media and also demonstrate, since his songs were also intended for dancing, that performers were not always watched and listened to silently. Hence the entertainer's job was to make it possible for others to sing, dance and play games. Where medieval audiences could make demands and participate freely and frequently, today we discourage interaction

²² Thomas Cramer has presented good evidence that the aesthetic quality of a poem in the thirteenth century was measured by the lines containing variants of previously known poetic lines. The hearers perceived this as ornamental variation. Aesthetically, placing value in such variation means that we should not necessarily seek unity in a lyric text, 'Die Autorität des Musters: Mittelalterliche Literatur als Variationskunst und die Folgen für ihre Ästhetik', in *Construction* ed. by Poag, pp. 9–30 (p. 27). Such texts have been perceived mistakenly by modern readers as inconsistent or fragmented.

²³ Cross-cultural studies of contemporary singers of oral epics have shown that the performer typically accompanies himself with a stringed instrument, but how this instrument is used, and whether the epic is sung or recited or both in alternating fashion for prosimetric narratives is unique to each culture, as proven by contributions spanning the globe from Scandinavia to Central Asia in *The Oral Epic*, ed. by Reichl.

between audience and performer in many of our performative events. For example, Western orthodox theatre inhibits audience–performer interaction, but avant-garde and experimental theatre encourage it. In some cultures performers even expect the audience to stop the show and have a bit repeated that they especially enjoyed. Therefore, contrary to many of our own assumptions about performance art, medieval conventions allowed for mixing media, required performers to be extremely versatile, and fostered a great range of audience–performer dynamics. These differences in expectation then and now can be expressed in terms of performance goals.

Since most cultures around the world mix media (dance, mime, recitation, singing, instrumentation), a performer's training in several media was perhaps the most predictable aspect of his work because he had control over rehearsals. Much more difficult to anticipate was the task of attracting and satisfying diverse audiences. Except for the imperial and episcopal courts, most courts were rather provincial, composed of only a small household. Few of its members had much education or sophistication in the arts. As a result travelling performers, whether they travelled as troupes or individuals, had to be exceedingly versatile in order to appeal to a wide variety of expectations, from the emperor and educated courtier-bishops and princes, who were the most engaged patrons in Germany, to the provincial nobles who were more likely to share an aesthetic sensibility with their peasants than with their emperor. And oftentimes the performer found before him in one room not a homogeneous segment of this spectrum, but its entire range. The variable composition of audiences also meant that the minstrel could not easily anticipate the kind of response he would receive. Thus, adaptability, spontaneity and quick wits were essential to a successful career. Today too, performers pride themselves in being able to entertain all types of audiences.

Appealing to the audience was of paramount importance but also very difficult. Because everyone knew the performer's success depended on audience satisfaction, audiences and individual patrons were able to dictate artistic styles and standards to a great extent. The creative poet-minstrel, although basically an entertainer, may have been appreciated and cultivated for his wit and genuine artistry at a few courts where the aesthetic component took on primary importance. But since audiences were so diverse in composition, their reception and evaluation of a performance did not necessarily reflect a high aesthetic standard or sophistication. As a result, if minstrels had to please such diverse audiences, we must attribute to them a broad spectrum of performance modes.

The most creative proponents of performance theory (Victor Turner, Richard Schechner, Eugenio Barba) have demonstrated that the goals of performance vary because cultures have different relationships to the illusions created in performance. In many cultures spectators remain conscious of illusion in performance whether it is a miming, an imitation of birdsong, or the enactment of dramatic events. Spectators are fully aware at all times that the performer is himself and play-acting at the same time whereas in other cultures this pretend nature of the performative event is

forgotten or suppressed. Where the illusion of reality is not the goal, the spectator remains aware of the performer's liminality. As I use it, liminality is the threshold between two states of consciousness the performer crosses as he shifts from his own everyday consciousness and persona to the role or roles he presents in front of an audience.²⁴

Many cultures make no attempt to separate audience from performers, especially when active interaction between the two is desired. Few strive, as orthodox Western theatre does, to disguise the fact that an actor is playing a role and to separate audience from performers with a curtain to achieve a 'willing suspension of disbelief.' The black box theatre was designed for just this purpose. Such differences in the cultural attitude toward illusion also directly influence the concept of a 'role' played by a performer. As long as the performance does not depend on illusion, the performer has the freedom to play multiple roles without needing technical aids such as a stage, curtain or properties; he need not even indicate role changes with his voice. The meaning of 'role' varies greatly. Where in our culture a role is defined as the consistent portrayal of a single character, in others each scene carries with it a new role and voice that need not be related in any way to the previous one.²⁵ These insights need to be applied to medieval performance. The roles played by the first person voice in *Minnesang* and the narrator in romance have been studied recently in some detail, but here, too, research has focussed on texts without the framework of performance theory that would allow us to posit an audience that is critically aware of the illusions and its own active role in a performance.²⁶

Medieval Performers

Who were these performers then, and what did they do? Professional minstrels may be defined as all those who were known publicly for satisfying the human need for entertainment and spectacle and supported themselves primarily by means of

²⁴ Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1987), pp. 41, 101.

²⁵ Richard Schechner, *Essays on Performance Theory, 1970–1976* (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1977), p. 17.

²⁶ On the lyric first person role, see Wenzel, 'Stimme', Peter Strohschneider, 'Nu sehent, wie der singet! Vom Hervortreten des Sängers im Minnesang', in *Aufführung*, ed. by Jan-Dirk Müller, pp. 7–30, Volker Mertens, 'Kaiser und Spielmann. Vortragsrollen in der höfischen Lyrik', in *Höfische Literatur Hofgesellschaft höfische Lebensformen um 1200. Kolloquium am Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung der Universität Bielefeld, 3. bis 5. November 1983*, ed. by Gert Kaiser and Jan-Dirk Müller (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1986), pp. 455–69. On the several voices of the narrator, see Michael Curschmann 'Hören—Lesen—Sehen. Buch und Schriftlichkeit im Selbstverständnis der volkssprachlichen literarischen Kultur Deutschlands um 1200', *Beiträge*, 106 (1984), 218–57.

performance. Practised mostly by men and a few women,²⁷ their occupation encompassed multifarious activities and several media that required them to be extremely versatile. These people combined the skills of entertainer, poet, singer, composer, dancer, actor, musician, and animal trainer. Such a group I designate as minstrels. Those carrying an instrument were chiefly referred to in sources according to that instrument but many also performed in additional ways, such as telling stories, singing epic or lyric songs, performing with puppets or animals, leading a dance, reading from a book, reciting a narrative with or without accompaniment, playing instrumental accompaniment for singing, dancing, or other group activities. In all cases, a performance is both aural and visual, and entertainments were far more frequently participatory than today. Of primary interest here is the subgroup of poet-composers, actors and storytellers who often accompanied themselves on instruments as they performed literary works. But it is extremely difficult to separate this subgroup reliably from others because they were multi-talented, they experienced the stigma of low social status, and shared the same lifestyle at least some time in their lives.

The standard terms are all generic with a common denominator meaning 'entertainer' so that they hide the variations within the group itself. The term 'minstrel' (OFr *ménestrel*) itself comes from the verb meaning 'to minister to' or 'cater to'. Latin texts from the earliest Church Fathers in the fourth century right through to the sixteenth use primarily four terms: *joculator*, *mimus*, *histrion*, *scurra*. The feminine counterparts are *joculatrix*, and *meretrix*. These terms were simply carried over by writers from century to century so that by the twelfth century they no longer designate the categories of performers that had been common in ancient Rome. The Latin *vagus* referred to medieval itinerant scholar-poets of Latin verse but is also found occasionally in reference to vernacular poets. Thus all these terms except *vagus* can only be translated as 'minstrel' since performers in general were not specialized until the beginning of the fifteenth century.²⁸ The same is true for the terms referring to women. (See section on women, Chapter 4.) The generic medieval German terms are *spilman*, (*spilliute*), *gernder man*, *varnder man*, and the feminine

²⁷ The sources indicate that the vast majority of performers were men. Whether these sources accurately reflect the number of women in the profession or not, we cannot know. Nevertheless, I shall refer to a single minstrel as 'he' instead of using both masculine and feminine pronouns and do not pretend that both genders could have been equally represented when that assumption has no basis in the records. I do, however, discuss women performers whenever they appear. See section on Women (Chapter 4) where I discuss the few references to women where it is quite clear that they are truly performers and no allegations of prostitution have been made.

²⁸ Christopher Page too translates most of the Latin terms with 'minstrel' recognizing that a great many medieval writers were content to generalize, *The Owl and the Nightingale: Musical Life and Ideas in France 1100–1300* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 13, 15.

forms are *spilwîp* and *spilmennin*.²⁹ These terms, too, denote a set of individuals in a service role characterized by entertaining.

The unavoidable dilemma with MHG *spilman*, *varnde liute*, L *joculator*; OFr *ménestrel* and the many other medieval terms for ‘minstrel’, ‘performer’, and ‘entertainer’ is that, as collective nouns, they include a vast spectrum of people of diverse economic status who perform a variety of activities and lead a settled or itinerant existence at different stages in their careers. A single minstrel’s lifestyle, social status and working conditions could change dramatically during his career. Konrad von Würzburg is instructive in this respect. Evidence points to his having been a professional wayfaring poet-minstrel early in his career since he is listed as a *vagus*.³⁰ Later a number of patrons, well-to-do burghers as well as ecclesiastics in the Strasbourg and Basel areas commissioned him to produce literary works. Eventually he established himself in Basel, and bought a house in the *Spiegelgasse* (if the Konrad listed in the city records is the same person), and made a living from his literary compositions.³¹ He composed melodies to his poems, short narratives (*maeren*), romances and historical narratives. Konrad has certainly left us a great variety of genres in his oeuvre that demonstrate his artistry in particular, but also the possibility that a talented individual could build a reputation for himself and income enough to support a family. Thus if our information correctly describes Konrad’s career, then it offers evidence for the versatility, creativity, monetary remuneration and social mobility of poet-performers.

In an attempt to be more precise about medieval entertainers, scholars have made generic distinctions within this broad category. Since minstrels were free to use media in several different compositional patterns, descriptive sources normally did not distinguish among various groups or kinds of performers, nor did the sources use terms as consistently as we would like. Attempts to define subgroups fall along

²⁹ According to Antonie Schreier-Hornung, by 1200 MHG *spilman* dominates as translation of most Latin terms like *scurra*, *mimus*, *histrio* and *joculator*, *Spielleute*, *Fahrende*, *Aussenseiter: Künstler der mittelalterlichen Welt* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1981), pp. 28–29. Werner Danckert comes to the same conclusion, *Unehrliche Leute. Die verfemten Berufe* (Munich: Francke Verlag, 1963), pp. 215–16. See also Laurentius Diefenbach under the Latin entries *joculator*, *mimus*, *histrio*, *scurra* for a long list of medieval German translations for each, *Glossarium Latino-Germanicum mediae et infimae aetatis*. (Frankfurt am Main: Baer, 1857). Concerning all the generic terms see the detailed lexical study of legal usage by Freidrich Scheele, “‘Spillute [...] di sint alle rechtelos’. Zur rechtlichen und sozialen Stellung des Spielmanns in Text und Bild des Sachsenspiegels”, in *Der Sachsenspiegel als Buch*, ed. by Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand and Dagmar Hüpper (Bern: Lang, 1991), pp. 315–57.

³⁰ Rüdiger Brandt, *Konrad von Würzburg* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1987), p. 65.

³¹ Ursula Peters, *Literatur in der Stadt. Studien zu den sozialen Voraussetzungen und kulturellen Organisationsformen städtischer Literatur im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1983), pp. 114–16.

disciplinary lines: musicologists take *spilman* to mean primarily instrumentalists, literary historians seek to distinguish just the poets and transmitters of literary works from all others,³² and the sociologists examine the minstrel as part of a much larger, amorphous set of social marginals.³³ Although not inaccurate in themselves, these scholarly studies do not lead us to discover those characteristics that contribute to the minstrels' performative competencies.

The collective term, *varend liute*, presents the same ambiguity as *spilman* since it reveals little about a minstrel's employment situation and performative competence.³⁴ The domestic–wayfaring dichotomy accepted by many musicologists and social historians caused them to posit two distinct social and economic levels in the sources. Attachment to a household could be permanent or temporary. *Varend liute* does not distinguish between instrumentalists and poet-minstrels, and more importantly, does not designate itinerants only. Hans Joachim Moser in his painstaking study of almost all documentary evidence for instrumentalist–minstrel activities, misunderstood the heading in the account books.³⁵ He believed this category referred only to the wayfaring minstrels and not to anyone employed at court or in a city because he also misunderstood the concept of 'badge' as an identifying marker. Such badges designated the lord whom the minstrel served, but Moser thought it identified not a domestic, but a minstrel who had won the protection of a lord but without domestic service. Consequently he created of *varend*

³² See Eberhard Bahr's evaluation of research in 'Der 'Spielmann' in der Literaturwissenschaft des 19. Jahrhunderts', *ZfdPh*, 73 (1954) 174–96 and much more recently, L. Peter Johnson, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zum Beginn der Neuzeit*, vol. II/1, *Die höfische Literatur der Blütezeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1999), pp. 65–91.

³³ Wolfgang Hartung's sociological definition is almost all-encompassing so that it includes non-performers. For him 'minstrel' is not only a name for a profession, but also a generalized term for all itinerants who, lacking patronage, exist on the periphery of society without a stable place of residence, reputable profession or social status, *Die Spielleute. Fahrende Sänger des Mittelalters* (Düsseldorf: Artemis & Winkler, 2003), pp. 31–38. For similar assessment of marginals, see Danckert 215–18 and Jürgen Brandhorst's entire study, 'Spielleute, Vaganten und Künstler', in *Randgruppen der Spätmittelalterlichen Gesellschaft. Ein Hand- und Studienbuch*, ed. by Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller (Warendorf: Fahlbusch, 1994) pp. 157–80. See also Ernst Schubert concerning the medieval German terminology, *Fahrendes Volk im Mittelalter* (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 1995), pp. 203–04.

³⁴ Helmut Tervooren, *Sangspruchdichtung* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1995), p. 28.

³⁵ The original text of the Wolfhart Helttamt account books have been published for the year 1392 only, 'Nota liber Rationis Walfardi Helttamt', in *Sammlung historischer Schriften und Urkunden. Geschöpft aus Handschriften*, ed. by M. Freiherr von Freyberg (Tübingen: Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1829), vol. 2, pp. 81–168; Hans Joachim Moser cites Freyberg, vol. 2, p. 90, in *Die Musikergenossenschaften im deutschen Mittelalter* (Rostock: Hinstorff, 1910; Wiesbaden: Sändig, 1972), pp. 28–30.

liute a category of itinerants with patrons that he called *patronisierte Vaganten*, a category that cannot be substantiated.³⁶ If one looks carefully at the usage in account books and other texts, a number of people listed under *varend liute* were indeed employed at a court, others were wayfarers. Hence in the text Moser cites, *varend* refers to all guests who come from elsewhere to the court bursar's office for remuneration. In fact, *varender* was used to refer to all performers, as a charter (1400) by the Count of Rappoltstein shows in which he names his piper Henselin King of Minstrels: *henselin, mime Pfiffer vnd varenden manne*.³⁷ Moser's misinterpretation demonstrates how necessary it is to scrutinize every occurrence of a term and to accept the indeterminacy of these designations in a great many instances.

It would seem obvious that an instrumentalist is called *spilman* in contrast to performers of words called MHG *singære* (singer), *sprechære*, *sager* (speaker, reciter), and to masters of ceremonies called *herolt* (herald). But these neat definitions describe only appearances.³⁸ *Spilman* is so broad that it can encompass any and all performance competencies. *Singære* tends to refer to the lyric singer or poet-minstrel, but could also include the activity of a reciter (speaker) and an epic singer. Similarly *sprechære* and *sager* refer to tellers of stories or reciters but do not exclude singing or instrumental accompaniment.³⁹ And the *Spruchdichter* sang their gnomic and political verses to melodies of their own composition.⁴⁰ Judging from a

³⁶ Moser, pp. 30–31.

³⁷ I have reproduced the entire text by Schmassmann, Count of Rappoltstein concerning the Kingdom of Minstrels that functions under his aegis in Appendix A, cited according to the edition by K. Albrecht, *Rappoltsteinisches Urkundenbuch 759–1500*, 5 vols (Colmar: Barth, 1891–96). This kingdom is also called the Alsatian Brotherhood (see Chapter 2).

³⁸ These agentive nouns are concrete according to Dennis Green when compared to their base verbs that are also used metaphorically, but from our perspective they are non-specific to the extent that all of the terms listed can be applied to the same referent, p. 83.

³⁹ Heinz Mundschau, *Sprecher als Träger der 'tradition vivante' in der Gattung 'Märe'*, GAG, 63 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1972), pp. 14–21.

⁴⁰ Tervooren classifies *Sangspruchdichter* as part of the varied group of travelling entertainers (p. 29). According to Walther Blank, it is seldom possible to distinguish *Spruchdichter*, *Minnesinger*, and other poet-singers according to social status and education, because all seem to have had basic schooling at least, 'Einführung und Kommentar', *Mittelhochdeutsche Spruchdichtung früher Meistersang. Der Codex Palatinus Germanicus 350 der Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1974), vol. 2, pp. 1–116 (p. 26). Other literary historians distinguish between the predominantly aristocratic *Minnesinger* and the lower status *Spruchdichter*, that is, the professional poets who also performed in the lord's hall, see for example L. Peter Johnson, *Geschichte*, p. 71. Nevertheless, both composed their own melodies and lyrics. Schubert as a social historian simply calls all those who use verses and rhymes in their performance *Sprecher* including the *Spruchdichter* and ignores the fact that melodies were an integral part of most performances, pp. 205–12. The situation in

typical lyric line, *des ère singe ich unde sage*, performers who referred to themselves in this manner were not limited to a single medium or genre.⁴¹ The difference between singer and reciter did not become distinct until the end of the fourteenth century when we find consistent evidence for a speaker like William of Hildegaersberch who did indeed recite his gnomic poems without melody.⁴² The same gradual development applies to heralds, too, whose tasks overlapped with those of other entertainers until they began to specialize. After 1400 an increase in the number of positions for performers, and changes in performance techniques allowed many to specialize as heralds, singers, instrumentalists or poets.⁴³

Terms for instrumentalists follow the same pattern of ambiguity. Specific agentive nouns like fiddler, trumpeter, lutenist, and drummer are found primarily in account books, tax records, and land registers although the repertory of individuals is not limited to instrumental performance. These sources primarily list what a minstrel was best known for or how he identified himself but occasionally also reveal multiple talents. For example, an entry in the Vienna land register *c.* 1390 lists a *Hans lautenslaher, des herzogs sänger*.⁴⁴ Listed as a lutenist in city records, Hans was apparently employed primarily as a singer at the Habsburg court of Albrecht III. And if he also played for dances or accompanied a singer, we are not told. Entries of this type, though infrequent, demonstrate that a single person could be known for several types of performance.⁴⁵

England is different. According to Andrew Taylor, the poems comparable to *Spruchdichtung* were sung to old, well-known melodies if at all since no musical notation has been found, 'Songs', p. 55.

⁴¹ Mundschau, p. 17.

⁴² See Mundschau, p. 21, and Frits van Oostrom, *Court and Culture: Dutch Literature, 1350–1450*, trans. by Arnold Pomerans (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 37–39.

⁴³ Ursula Peters had to concede in her attempt to distinguish between *Sprecher* and herald that they indeed both performed as entertainers, 'Herolde und Sprecher in mittelalterlichen Rechnungsbüchern', *ZfjA*, 105 (1976), 233–50. I have argued that no clear distinction is possible, Dobozý, 'The Many Faces of the Medieval Court Minstrel', in '*in hōhem prīse*', ed. by McConnell, pp. 31–44 (pp. 31–32). Musicologists recognize this blurring of the two roles but often choose to omit references to heralds in their analyses, see Richard Rastall, 'The Minstrel Court in Medieval England', in *A Medieval Miscellany in Honour of Professor John Le Patourel*, ed. by R. L. Thomson (Leeds: Leeds Literary and Philosophical Society, 1982), pp. 96–105. Andrew Taylor has shown the same overlapping of activities between heralds and singers in England in 'Songs', p. 53.

⁴⁴ Anton Malecek, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte der Wiener Lautenmacher im Mittelalter', *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Wien*, 5/6 (1947), 5–23 (p. 6).

⁴⁵ Examples of this type, in which a single person is listed according to two different performance capacities can be multiplied. For example, the Tyrolean accounts for 1335 and 1338 contain the designations *cantor* and *sager* for Johannes aus Laetsch, in Ludwig

That performers are extremely versatile is expected in the world of performance, but certainly renders the concept of medieval performer indeterminate. Like good musicians today, many minstrels were doublers and triplers who played one or two instruments in addition to their primary one. And those in troupes often substituted for one another or traded parts as band members today often do. Since the performers themselves were extremely flexible and multi-talented, they picked up jobs and parts as they were available. Because performers were not limited to a single medium, genre, or instrument, a reference to a fiddler tells us little. In most instances the specific designation used fails to inform us of any other media that the individual may have used regularly or of his performance competencies. Nor do most references tell us whether the performer reproduced the compositions of others or also composed his own material. The lesson here is that we can rarely make assumptions about a minstrel's specialization, performance competencies or even social status based on these terms.⁴⁶ This very same ambiguity has been repeatedly detected in sources on French performers as well.⁴⁷

Another attempt at greater precision led scholars of both French and German literature to couple social rank with creativity.⁴⁸ Regarding German literature they

Schönach, 'Urkundliches über die Spielleute in Tirol. Von der Mitte des XII. Bis zur Mitte des XIV. Jahrhunderts', *ZdFA*, 31 (1887), 171–85 (p. 181).

⁴⁶ Joachim Bumke also stresses the fact that the *Spruchdichter* cannot be distinguished from other performers referred to as minstrels or singers and reiterates that the variety of performances offered by minstrels is well attested, *Höfische Kultur. Literatur und Gesellschaft im hohen Mittelalter* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1986), p. 692.

⁴⁷ See Edmond Faral, *Les Jongleurs en France au moyen âge*. (1919; Paris: Champion, 1964), p. 11; Laurence Wright, 'Misconceptions Concerning the Troubadours, Trouvères and Minstrels', *Music and Letters*, 48 (1967), 35–39; Raleigh Morgan, 'Old French Jogleor and Kindred Terms', *Romance Philology*, 7 (1953–54), 279–325 (p. 291). In the most recent attempt to distinguish clearly between *jongleur* and *ménéstrel* in French sources, Paul Bracken too has found that no texts use the terms consistently, 'The Myth of the Medieval Minstrel: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Performers and the *Chansonnier* Repertory', *Viator*, 33 (2002), 100–16 (p. 102). Drawing on English wardrobe accounts, he also recognizes the 'futility of categorizing performers using terminology, for it reveals a continuum of performers from low-status itinerants whose rewards were comparable with alms payments, through paid musicians associated with or retained in an aristocratic entourage, to poet-musicians of relatively high status on the fringes of the chivalric caste', p. 103. In contrast, Evelyn B. Vitz claims that the designations of *jongleur* and *ménéstrel* are distinct, *Orality and Performance in Early French Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), pp. 50–51 and has proposed that Chrétien was a *ménéstrel*, 'Chrétien de Troyes: clerc ou ménestrel?', *Poétique*, 81 (1990), 23–42 (p. 25).

⁴⁸ Scholars of French literature have also attempted to distinguish between those who composed poetry and those who merely reproduced the works of others. They base their conclusions on sources like *The Vidas of the Troubadours* that do indeed separate *troubadour* from *jongleur* based on class and production of songs, but several lives also blur the distinction. They mention that many a *jongleur* became a *troubadour* specifically because he

argued that nobles and knights were the primary creators of *Minnesang*, romance, and vernacular legends, whereas the lower status minstrel, thought incapable of poetic composition, merely reproduced the literary work of others. It is true that the vast majority of extant *Minnesang* is attributed to courtiers firmly situated at a court, and we may also assume that many performed their own songs.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, it was conceded that some minstrels did indeed produce their own poetry, including the *Spielmannsepen*, in addition to performing oral poetry, but until very recently, few scholars accepted the possibility that these minstrels might also have performed in an aristocratic setting.⁵⁰ To be sure not all poets fit the category of minstrel. A large percentage of the poets of *Minnesang* were nobles and ministerials, and, like Hartmann von Aue and Wolfram von Eschenbach, many expressly called themselves knights.⁵¹ They were apparently not professionals; others, however, like Walther von der Vogelweide and the *Spruchdichter* called themselves singers and do indeed fit the professional category and certainly performed at court.⁵² Undoubtedly differences in social status between nobles who composed and possibly performed

composed his own songs and was recognized for it.

⁴⁹ Among the *Minnesinger* Erich Kleinschmidt counts 10 princes, 28 lesser nobles, and 57 ministerials, 'Minnesang als höfisches Zeremonialhandeln', in *Der deutsche Minnesang: Aufsätze zu seiner Erforschung*, ed. by Hans Fromm, Wege der Forschung, 608, 2 vols (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), vol. 2, pp. 134–59 (p. 146).

⁵⁰ Eberhard Bahr and Michael Curschmann define the *Spielmann* as a low status performer who transmitted his own poetry and that of others to general audiences but not necessarily at court, and, therefore, they assume a higher status performer existed who performed epic poetry in the lord's hall, in 'Spielmannsdichtung', *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1979) vol. 4, pp. 105–22 (p. 114). See also the most recent comments on performance of *Spielmannsdichtung* by Sidney M. Johnson, 'Pre-Courtly Epics', in *A Companion to Middle High German Literature to the Fourteenth Century*, ed. by Francis G. Gentry (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 397–430 (pp. 398–99).

⁵¹ C. Soeteman has noted that most poets we think highly of were not known or did not present themselves as poets until Rudolf von Ems and Heinrich von dem Türlin. They were known instead as knights: 'Zumindest für Dichter ritterlichen Standes zieht sich diese merkwürdige Nichtachtung des eigenen literarischen Tuns ungebrochen durchs Mittelalter hindurch', 'Dichten, Dichter, Dichtung. Die Geschichte eines Wortstammes', in *Festgabe für L. L. Hammerich. Aus Anlass seines siebzigsten Geburtstages*, (Copenhagen: Naturmetodens Sproginstitut, 1962), pp. 271–80 (p. 246).

⁵² Walter's biography is taken from *VL*, vol. 10, col. 665–97. Scholars now agree that no clear divide exists between *Minnesinger* and *Spruchdichter*. See Tervooren, *Sangspruchdichtung*, p. 31. Manfred Scholz allows for a fluid distinction between the two genres based on domiciled and itinerant lifestyles, "'Der biderbe patriarke missewende fr̄" und "dominus Walterus"—auch ein Versuch zum Begriff des fahrenden Spruchdichters', in *Wolfer von Erla. Bischof von Passau (1191–1204) und Patriarch von Aquileja (1204–1218)*, ed. by Egon Boshof and Fritz Peter Knapp (Heidelberg: Winter, 1994), pp. 301–24 (p. 322–23).

poetic works and their non-aristocratic, professional counterparts directly influenced the day to day lives of all poets, but in individual cases the dividing line is difficult to draw on any grounds, be they sociological, musicological or literary.⁵³

The very ambiguity of the agentive nouns attests to the complexity of the conditions under which entertainers made a living. It would be easy to attribute terminological imprecision to carelessness in our sources but it is just as likely that the sources are accurate, and that the indeterminacy in lexical usage reflects directly the indeterminacy of the trade itself. Minstrels cannot be precisely labelled because the performing arts encouraged or even forced performers to avoid specialization and to develop instead multiple talents and adapt themselves to changing situations. Another problem is that the standard terms do not record new developments in performance customs over time, just as they fail to note changes in a person's status, performance competencies or lifestyle during the course of a career. Konrad von Würzburg and Walther von der Vogelweide are examples of just how difficult it is to track a person's career based on his personal testimony and the historical records.

For these reasons I take minstrel (*Spielmann*) as the generic designation for the entire multifarious group of performers even if my interest lies in the poet-minstrels. This inclusive definition is a helpful starting point because societal norms and performance conventions influenced all types of performers. In fact, the commonalities in performers' lives and social status are precisely the factors that make it difficult to define subgroups. First, almost all performers were of low social

⁵³ Scholars of German have now shown that no clear-cut division can be reliably determined even among the courtly love poets, but accepted ideas die hard. Walther von der Vogelweide was long considered a ministerial even after the account books of Wolfger von Erla were published in 1970 and revealed him to be a professional wayfaring poet. See Hedwig Heger's edition of the account books, *Das Lebenszeugnis Walthers von der Vogelweide. Die Reiserechnungen des Passauer Bischofs Wolfger von Erla* (Vienna: Schendl, 1970). See also the articles re-evaluating the historical documentation on Wolfger and Walther in a collection edited by Egon Boshof and Fritz Peter Knapp, *Wolfger von Erla. Bischof von Passau (1191–1204) und Patriarch von Aquileja (1204–1218)* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1994). Bracken, too, continues to resist accepting non-knightly minstrels as creative poets. Using examples from French literary texts, Bracken reiterates the old claim that the nobility were responsible for the production and transmission of French epics arguing that since not all performers were denigrated, those who were respected must have belonged to the nobility and many of them also took part in combat. All others he dismisses as mere servants. He cites references to minstrels in texts like *Chanson d'Aspremont* where a poet-performer is also a warrior and close associate of the courtiers (pp. 111–12, 116). The major problem with his examples and argument is that in almost no example is it certain that the performer mentioned is also a member of the knightly class. In one case he is a foundling (p. 114). An additional problem with his argument is that although he uses French texts, he assumes that the situation in these texts is also applicable across Europe whereas the German epic texts do not fit this pattern. The *Nibelungenlied* and *Dukus Horant*, for example, present the aristocratic warrior-performer as an atypical phenomenon.

status and subject to varying degrees of denigration. Second, even though poet-minstrels participated in the lifestyle of a performer to different degrees at various times in their lives, the fundamental requirements for performing were very much the same for all. This means that the pressures of audience and patron demands under which they composed their performance material (i.e. music, poetry, body movement, gesture) were the same in many respects. Third, they needed access to audiences at fairs, taverns and courts, and the degree to which they satisfied those audiences and made a name for themselves (by word of mouth) determined their working conditions. Therefore, what minstrels had in common—the social and cultural context of performance—is what defines the conditions under which they lived and worked. The conditions then that pertain to performers and all performance conventions are the focus of Chapters 2, 3, and 4 below.

In the Interstices

Chapter 2, 'The View from the Centre: Minstrels as Pariah', evaluates medieval society's stereotyping of minstrels. As a group, *Spielleute* were considered pariah. The term pariah itself is instructive, since it originated with performers. In Tamil it specifically referred to drummers (Tamil *paraiyar* 'drummer') and was then applied to other marginalized village labourers, also commonly referred to as 'untouchables'. The term points out the recurrent dilemma of musicians and other professional performers in vastly different societies: they are disvalued and marginalized. This was very much the case in medieval Germany, although for different reasons than in India. Members of secular society often suspected them of criminality, and official Church records turned the minstrel into the very image of dissolute conduct. In spite of their pariah status, medieval minstrels in Germany and throughout Europe found favour with audiences and made a living because people in every society need and desire artistic entertainments including music, dance, song and storytelling. This means that although they were socially disvalued, the performances continued to fascinate. This contradiction posed an interesting dilemma for potential audiences, for not everyone embraced minstrels regardless of the merriment they offered. Therefore, the ability of medieval performers to survive and ply their trade despite this conflict forms the social foundation of our study. In sociological terms entertainers in the Middle Ages existed individually and as a group mostly in the interstices of society, between the threads that tie people into more stable relationships. For most minstrels interaction with their patrons or audiences was transitory and relationships were frequently temporary, probably even with their own peers. In spite of these difficulties, they were able to subsist and to make use of several different opportunities to interact with all levels of society in many types of situations. At the same time, their ability to perform a service was shaped to a great extent by the fact that they definitely moved outside the bounds of conventional social interaction and support.

Based on the authoritative writings of religious and secular institutions regulating social values and norms, this chapter reconsiders the formation of the minstrel as a stereotype of the depraved life. Secular laws are examined to discover why minstrels have limited legal rights. In addition to imputations of immorality, it can be shown that the legal system was not able to protect anyone who travelled and was not a well-known member of a community. As attested in the ecclesiastical record, the Church was hostile to performers throughout the Middle Ages. Pushing minstrels to the margins by withholding sacraments, the Church made of them a symbol of turpitude, immorality, and transgression by means of the relentlessly denigrating language of the canons. The minstrel image thus came to serve as a foil, exemplifying the opposite of what normative authorities in society advocated. This image of minstrels then became available for use, especially for moral theologians, whenever anyone was to be chastised for improper behaviour even when the infractions appear minor to modern readers.

Chapter 3, 'The Minstrel's Perspective: Performance and Morality', focuses on the fundamental techniques of the performer's trade. Performers of all kinds experienced essentially the same reception pressures from audience and patron even if not all performers (knightly poets, *Minnesinger* and itinerants) were dependent on them to the same degree. I apply performance theory to the performer's task of satisfying audience expectations and argue that the very techniques and behaviours needed to produce a good performance also bring minstrels into conflict with social mores. In fact, I submit that the performer accepted (perhaps grudgingly) the hindrances of his social status because of his sense of liminality. For him there was no border, only an in-between sphere in which he could transform place, time, his own persona, and also his audience.

In this chapter I draw on Richard Schechner's expanded definition of performance and the implications of the performer's liminality. In addition I use the elementary performance techniques formulated by Eugenio Barba. They demonstrate the bigger than life posture and vitality the performer must project in order to attract an audience and to create an electrically charged performance. In comparison, Hugh of St Victor's discussion of moderation in gesture and bodily comportment has a very different purpose. A person is to use moderation and discipline to achieve virtue which is defined as congruence or harmony between mind and body. Proper comportment then is crucial to achieving virtue because it makes visible in the individual the Platonic ideal of harmony and moderation. Thus a histrionic stance and gesture flies in the face of virtues like moderation; in addition, the 'as if' or pretend posture of playing a role (and the resulting liminality) contradicts the concept of harmony. When compared to Hugh's ideal of moderation, an ideal also promoted at secular courts, Barba's performance techniques that create larger than life behaviours appear immoderate, morally undisciplined, and potentially subversive.

This moral vantage point has additional implications. Several twelfth-century theologians like Peter the Chanter and Honorius Augustodunensis were well aware

that para-liturgical plays and also the liturgy were performative events and that the goal of every performance is to attract an audience. Once the two groups minstrels and clergy pursued the same goals, a competition was imminent. And so they attempted to separate the sacred from the secular. But this was difficult because both groups began to use the same strategies. Some priests, and especially the Franciscans who preached in fields and town squares, felt themselves in competition with minstrels and for good reason. Peter the Chanter complains that priests inserted popular, profane topics into the liturgy in order to entice more lay worshippers. The sermons of the very successful Franciscan, Berthold von Regensburg (1210–72), reveal just how thoroughly he integrated performative techniques. However, the inability to delineate clearly sacred and profane performance practice led theologians like John of Salisbury, who were quite sensitive to the emotional impact of all types of performance, to criticize even the use of plainsong in church.

In Chapter 4, ‘Mobility and Versatility’, I survey the many types of odd jobs minstrels performed. In order to survive, minstrels had to take on many types of temporary jobs outside their metier in town, city and at courts. Their trade required itinerancy or travel for a good portion of the year. On their travels covering most of Europe, entertainers stopped in a variety of different places, including small taverns and large castles, where they would perform for the inhabitants when invited and would stay as long as they were welcome. Often entertainers were itinerants because no single locale offered enough employment to make a living and enough material for developing new performances. To supplement their income between performances, they performed odd jobs. Travelling also enabled them to exchange material like songs, melodies and techniques with other entertainers. Walter Salmen has shown that no city or market was so out of the way that minstrels failed to perform there. German minstrels went to Spain, England, Ukraine and all the way to the headquarters of the Teutonic Knights in Marienburg (Prussia).⁵⁴

In a period when sporadic employment was the norm for many occupations, the most stable jobs for minstrels were with a wealthy, noble household. Minstrels who became members of a household gained financial security, some physical and legal protection, and a certain amount of social status above that of simple itinerants even though domestic minstrels also travelled a great deal, sometimes on missions for their lord but often simply on their own circuits in order to perform and earn additional income. Many, like the domestics of the Habsburg house in Vienna, earned well enough to buy a house. These domestics are also the most likely group to have established confraternities for themselves.⁵⁵ Below this group were those

⁵⁴ The circuits have been described by Walter Salmen in *Der fahrende Musiker im europäischen Mittelalter* (Kassel: Hinnenthal, 1960). This monograph was essentially updated and reprinted as *Der Spielmann im Mittelalter* (Innsbruck: Helbling, 1983), pp. 91–109.

⁵⁵ My assertion contradicts the accepted interpretation of social historians who discuss the marginality of minstrels, including the recent work of Schubert. They all maintain that what minstrels wanted most was to integrate themselves into society. See further discussion of this

professionals who moved from court to court finding temporary work at a large court. For example, two German fiddlers, Conrad and Henry, spent seven years with Edward I of England as members of the *familia*.⁵⁶ Several poet-minstrels belonged to this mobile category. Often minstrels worked as palace or town watchmen, couriers, and probably also gathered news or intelligence for their hosts. Many like Frauenlob (fl. 1270–1318) found patrons for a while but seem to have moved from one to the other more frequently than the records show for those listed as instrumentalists. It is very difficult to follow the careers of individuals using sources like account books, tax registers and charters, although I attempt to do so whenever possible. Much of our information about individual lives comes from the comments of poet-minstrels about themselves and their fellow performers in their songs, but in that context they had every reason to adorn the truth for their own benefit. The lowest on the social and economic scale were those less fortunate itinerants who never made a name for themselves and had to work one-night stands in villages and towns, although some found jobs as town waits and tower musicians watching for fires and sounding the hours day and night. Having but few friends or family connections, these people endured a sporadic and meagre income and the physical dangers of travel without assurance of legal protection. They had to accept all types of performance opportunities and odd jobs in order to make a living.

Appealing to the Audience

The insights gained in Part I become the foundation of Part II. On the basis of minstrels' perceived moral deficiency, their itinerancy and variable job opportunities, I examine the literary evidence for the function and dynamics of performance. The sources are the narrative descriptions of minstrel activities in romances, short narratives, and the verses of the itinerant didactic poet-performers. Although marginality imposed hardships, they were unavoidable if one wanted to perform. The obvious causes of marginality were itinerancy, and the most rudimentary techniques for projecting to an audience openly transgressed the ideal of moderation. Consequently, performers could not avoid transgressing social norms. At the same time and almost in contradiction to the official societal image, they presented themselves in literary works as having a key role in shaping the mores of society. The next step is to discover how they compensate for their dishonourable status, how they construct authority for themselves and persuade audiences their claims are correct. The answer lies in the combination of words, song, and gesture,

thesis in Chapter 4.

⁵⁶ Constance Bullock-Davies cites several accounts and rolls attesting to the presence of Conrad and Henry at Edward's court from 1300 to 1306, *Register of Royal and Baronial Domestic Minstrels 1272–1327* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1986), pp. 37–38, 68–69.

in short, all the elements of performance that affect both hearts and minds of the audience.

Chapter 5, 'The Poet-Minstrel as Historian', offers a definition of poet-minstrel activities using literary evidence. Heinrich von Veldeke's *Eneit* treats as one what we consider three separate roles, that of poet, performer, and historian. Heinrich wrote what is considered the earliest vernacular German romance, and, in addition, reveals aspirations of historical veracity. I examine it as a narrative located between the traditional historical epics and Latin chronicles on the one hand and the new romance genre of the late twelfth century on the other. By adding his unique description of Eneas's wedding, Heinrich defines what he and poet-minstrels have in common: they interpret historical events and establish the reputations of epoch-making rulers. He associates himself with poet-minstrels by defining their common role as guardians of historical memory. In carrying out this task himself, he presents Eneas not only as the heroic founder of an empire but also adds by way of comparison an excursus on Frederick Barbarossa's grand feast. Heinrich had attended the feast in Mainz 1184 that celebrated the knighting of Frederick's two sons. As an eyewitness he not only records the event as chroniclers do, but also interprets the event as seminal in the history of the empire. By juxtaposing these two great men, Eneas and Frederick, he demonstrates how minstrels are able to designate specific rulers and events as epoch-making. This encomiastic excursus on Frederick I includes a promise that once a person is praised, the reputation thus created will endure into the future. Thus the thesis here is that the poet-minstrels interpret the past, and ensure that their interpretation is learned and remembered generation after generation.

Chapter 6, 'Negotiating the Presents: The Ritual Aspects of Gift-giving', builds on the functions of poet-performers enumerated in the previous chapter and asks the question: if minstrels are mere servants or itinerants and often denigrated, then how do they establish the credibility to fulfil their roles as commentators on history? The answer lies with the *Spruchdichter*. In several songs they argue for the accuracy of their reports and their ability to judge their hosts on moral grounds. In others they also challenge their audience to reinterpret conventional concepts like public prestige (*êre*) and commonly used pejorative phrases to disparage minstrels like *guot umb êre nemen* (to accept material goods in return for prestige). They succeeded in winning the credibility and monetary remuneration of many patrons, but not all. The evidence comes from descriptions in several romances in which minstrels are given gifts by their hosts and high-ranking guests. The performances themselves receive only cursory description, but once the grand feast concludes, and the minstrels have finished, the hosts take their turn to perform. In a public gift-giving they proffer gifts on the minstrels. These gifts and their ceremonious bestowal are frequently mentioned in romances and at such length that the gift-giving itself becomes more important than the minstrel performances. This type scene actually ritualizes the payment of performers in order to re-establish the social hierarchy. Acceptance of the gifts then obligates the minstrels to praise their hosts and the feast just attended

as they progress on their circuits. I argue that the gift-giving sets up a social contract between the wandering *Spruchdichter* and the host who commissions them to sing panegyrics about his patron wherever he travels. It is the ritual nature of such a contract, solidified by public word and gesture, that establishes a minstrel's credibility for those who witness the ritual.

Chapter 7, 'Re-memembering the Present', considers the affective influence of a performance on the audience. For the political panegyric it is now possible to stipulate the expectations of the audience. Members of the audience are aware of the minstrel's contract to produce encomia, his need to disseminate his songs, and his pleas for gifts and new contracts; they also desire praise. Based on this shared knowledge and expectations, the minstrel's mission is to build on these mutual desires when he constructs a satisfying scenic event. This means that each performance, especially before wealthy and powerful personages, had to serve multiple purposes. Kelin (fl. 1250–87) is just one example of a poet-performer capable of such multi-levelled poetry that entices and satisfies a variety of expectations. His songs show that in one poem he can sing an encomium to a previous host in such a way that it also contains an audition and appeal to the present auditors who might engage him for their own benefit and praise. Within the same performance he must illustrate the kind of praise songs he can offer. Thus every performance is also an audition for additional, new engagements. How convincing the poet-performer's claim is that he spreads *fama* essentially depends on sheer enjoyment of the show; if several spectators enjoy the performance they will engage the performer because they assume that others will enjoy hearing him too.

Poet-minstrels have several strategies for establishing authority. In Chapter 6 I made the case for the power of minstrels to build a reputation or destroy one. Songs by Walther von der Vogelweide (fl. 1170–1230) and Friedrich von Sonnenburg (fl. 1250–75), fulfilling the same functions as Kelin's verses, illustrate additional means of constructing the authority to build prestige. The tactic they use is to re-create vividly for spectators well-known recent events that they may even have participated in and to show them the import of what they experienced or only heard about. The performance of such songs reorganizes and intensifies the experience or memory of the auditors and is capable of convincing them of the poet-performer's correct analysis. For each song I include use of gesture, facial expression, clothing and voice indicating seriousness, irony, or light-hearted banter in consort with content to posit the intensity and affective impact of a performance. Hermann Damen's (fl. 1260–1310) verses and Kelin's masterful song also present a third level of meaning that ensures the dissemination of a person's *fama*; this is the partially hidden message to another minstrel. Such messages addressed to other performers within a song indicate that these performers are part of a co-operative network. Their messages pointed the way to generous hosts, and offered to exchange songs in order to assure rapid dissemination and increase the impact of their work on audiences. Thus this chapter shows that several songs are multi-layered and may carry out several tasks at once: first, they perform their encomia of their patron on their travels and not in front

of him; second, they illustrate their artistry in their songs; and third, they imply that they can create and perpetuate high public renown for their patrons. Many poems also imply a network in which one song is disseminated by many minstrels—this too makes each minstrel's assertions and promises much more forceful and reliable.

The earliest extant political-praise songs, and the rise of short narratives and romances coincide with the starting point of this study but are not the only reason for selecting this time frame of 1170–1400. During this period we see the expansion of the poet-minstrel's repertoire and performance customs as poetic composition changed from the oral medium to the written word. The minstrels met the challenge and actively transformed their performance practice from one that existed almost entirely in the oral media to one that included literary works. The thirteenth century is particularly exciting because minstrels brought this new written style to life in performance. Consequently this period is well suited for study because it offers enough stability, or put another way, it exhibits changes in culture and performance custom that are slow enough to justify applying the social cultural conditions outlined in part one to my analysis of the extant literary artifacts. To be sure, a number of additional changes must be taken into account. As we approach the end of my period, song manuscript collections shift emphasis (after 1360), minstrels establish brotherhoods, they specialize more and more, and jobs in city and at court become more plentiful.⁵⁷ After 1400, however, several rapid and significant changes appear that shift conditions of production, performance customs and modes of reception: singers come from the artisan class and often sing only part-time, instruments are re-designed, polyphonic choirs are established at secular courts, and access to manuscripts and printed broadsheets becomes easier. Taken together, these changes generate new media, modes of composition, and new tasks for the performer and are worth investigating in their own right, but go far beyond the design of this study.

⁵⁷ Tervooren lists four points that signal a break in the tradition of didactic and political poetry in the fourteenth century: (i) manuscript transmission changes after 1360; (ii) the number of themes is reduced and strophic form is less varied; (iii) conditions of production and reception change as town artisans take up the profession but do not become itinerants; (iv) the ethics of the knightly class begin to dissipate, *Sangspruchdichtung*, p. 126. However, as Frieder Schanze has shown, these poets also need to be understood together in historical series to understand the literary development of these genres. See his *Meisterliche Liedkunst zwischen Heinrich von Mügeln und Hans Sachs* (Munich: Francke, 1983).

Igitur histriones, qui ipso iure
sunt infames

Robert of Flamborough

CHAPTER TWO

The View from the Centre: Minstrels as Pariah

In the last twenty years the category of medieval performer has been redefined in sociological studies on medieval itinerants and trades. In Germany Wolfgang Hartung renewed interest in minstrels when he demonstrated that in medieval Europe they were considered pariah, like their drummer counterparts in India, and that marginality is the definitive social category for studying the lives of these performers.¹ Marginality as a sociological concept designates as marginals those who are considered by the representatives of the social norms and values to exhibit traits or actions, actual or imagined, that are censured because they are perceived to be a threat to the normative system. But they were still able to perform. Minstrels then are characterized by deficiency: they are deprived of legal rights and privileges, and social and economic status. This means a great many lived a hand to mouth existence, without fixed domicile, wages or even security of their person. It was their itinerancy and the fact that performing was deprecated as a dishonourable trade that placed them on the margins. The Church for its part defined them as dishonourable, immoral, guilty of excesses, and accordingly denied them access to the sacraments. Hence these people as a group were deprived of the dignity and rights normally enjoyed by the majority of the population.

Society marginalizes groups for objective and subjective reasons. The disapproval by society of certain occupations like the minstrel's inevitably influences its judgement of the performer's inherent character traits and private behaviour as an individual. In addition, members of society project onto a marginal group certain despised or scorned characteristics and actions that the group may not actually

¹ I refer here to Wolfgang Hartung's first book, *Die Spielleute. Eine Randgruppe in der Gesellschaft des Mittelalters* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1982).

exhibit. Groups are particularly disparaged when the traits or actions attributed to them have a long tradition of being prohibited by the dominant culture. Otherwise known as prejudices and stereotypes, such traits and actions can easily be applied when the people in question are simply classified categorically and not thought of as individuals. Medieval minstrels were 'marked' in this way.² Their reputation was tainted by claims that they were dissolute, greedy, untrustworthy, flattering and shameless liars.³ Nevertheless, they were able to go in and out of the dominant culture. In modern terms they were 'bi-cultural', which denotes an 'outsider' who establishes relations to the dominant culture. But minstrels in Germany and elsewhere in Europe had to be more flexible than that—they had to deal with several languages, cultures, classes and subgroups spread throughout the continent. Performers needed to enter into sets of relations on different levels with various members of society, just as they themselves were not members of any specific ethnic or minority group. Being able to interact with all kinds of people from all walks of life was not simply necessary for obtaining food and shelter, but of primary importance for successful performance. They had to be able to play to a great many different kinds of audiences in the same way that a good performer today prides himself in being able to satisfy any audience.

If society marginalizes a group by denigrating its members for actual or imagined traits and non-conformity, then we need to look for two levels in our sources: the first is the literal level of official texts that define minstrels as a generic group, and the second uncovers the traditional attitudes and unquestioned beliefs applied to them. In this chapter I examine well-known and previously studied texts produced by the dominant groups in society: ecclesiastical records and secular customaries. The language and rhetoric in both types of documents characterize minstrels as socially and legally deficient. Moreover, in these texts the creation of such an image has as much to do with false, but long held beliefs about performers. For minstrels were denigrated more for what they were thought to do than for what they actually did. A re-examination of these official, authoritative and normative texts and laws is necessary not only to unlock the attitudes and beliefs about minstrels, but also to discover the way in which the establishment defined itself. I hope to demonstrate that medieval society in the process of defining itself has difficulty integrating minstrels and, therefore, uses them by contrast to mark the boundary of socially acceptable norms of behaviour. And although these official normative texts treat performers primarily as a generic category, they reveal a great deal about the attitudes and beliefs of the dominant group towards entertainers. This chapter, then,

² Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), see the chapter, 'Passage, Margins and Poverty: Religious Symbols of Communitas'.

³ Brandhorst, p. 160.

is devoted to unlocking the information in secular law books, official ecclesiastical records and individual representatives of the Church.

The disparaging opinions about minstrels are reflected in the secular customaries that placed entertainers on the margins of the social structure. The ecclesiastical decrees went one step further—the early Church banished performers from the Christian sacraments altogether. Both sets of laws had a significant impact on minstrels in the Middle Ages because they functioned prescriptively. By informing people what is forbidden, they defined the dominant cultural values. Because these texts offered representative declarations of traditional values and *usus*, rather than personal or idiosyncratic opinions, they had the authority to define social norms and, therefore, to influence people's behaviour and beliefs. As a result they provide us with a standard by which we can measure the values society embraced. In the process of fulfilling this task, the Church was very concerned about instructing and supervising its own representatives, and, as we shall see, the Church records exhibit an attempt to control them. Ecclesiastics writing with the intent to correct clergy behaviour came to use the terms *joculator*, *histrio*, and *mimus* in the council records as a cultural symbol that delimits Christian behaviour and morality.

To be sure, any choice of texts steers the reader toward uncovering what she expects to find, but as long as my characterization of entertainers as pariah is understood not as an absolute category, but rather as a general designation drawn from specific types of documents, it is valid and useful. Legal texts are normally written with great attention to precise definitions and tend to be less ambiguous than any other type of text if we are seeking information about the social status of entertainers. The terms for performers (*histrio*, *joculator*, *spielmann*) are used in official documents as an abstraction. This usage yields almost no information about individual minstrels and does not allow us to make any conjectures about real lives. It is possible, however, to deduce from these rules and decrees some of the handicaps they imposed on minstrels' ability to make a living. Thus we must, therefore, keep in mind that the condition of marginality is one possible position on a scale that extends from complete rejection to partial membership in a community, and that each type of document and set of criteria yield a characterization that locates minstrels in a different place on that scale.

Using these same types of documents, historians like Jürgen Brandhorst and Ernst Schubert outlined several constraints and restrictions placed on minstrels by both secular and ecclesiastical institutions. They have assumed that the ecclesiastical records and secular customary laws both deliberately exclude minstrels from the religious, social and legal system. However, the motivation often appears less one of deliberate exclusion, than the result of the difficulty or impossibility of inclusion. Although the secular laws were influenced early on by synodal decisions, they recognized minstrel activities and way of life as commonplace and yet were unable to provide them with the protection and rights that the law normally provided freemen, women, and even bondmen. Defined as they were from the beginnings of Christianity in exclusionary terms as an external entity embodying the opposite of

accepted social norms, entertainers by the High Middle Ages had become the symbol of that which lies on the boundary of *usus*, convention, and acceptability.

What follows, then, is an examination of the category called minstrel found in authoritative sources. We read these texts with an eye toward discovering the implications of the deficiencies attributed to performers in many of these texts. An important consideration guides the reading: if texts are unable to characterize minstrels explicitly in a direct manner and this occurs because the system of social values is not able to accommodate minstrel activities, then minstrels have no identity as far as society is concerned. Texts that fall into this category strongly suggest that minstrels operate under different principles, principles governed by performance practice. It is worthwhile pursuing the thesis in this chapter and the next that pariah status for minstrels results from both the stereotyping by the dominant culture and the occupational requirements of performing. This chapter will follow the transformation of the minstrel category into a symbol marking the border of Christianity.

Territorial Customary Law

It is useful to begin with the territorial laws because they are relatively neutral sources. Until the appearance of Eike von Repgow's *Saxon Mirror* (*Sachsenspiegel*, c. 1235), the most representative vernacular text of legal custom in medieval Germany, no written record of laws had existed for three hundred years.⁴ Eike's stated intention is to describe and preserve custom. Although the text was not intended to be authoritative, it was immediately picked up as a model code in most German speaking territories in adaptations, and in translations known as the *Schwabenspiegel*, and *Deutschenspiegel*. When city codes were committed to writing from mid-thirteenth century on, they too drew heavily on the *Saxon Mirror* versions so that the *Mirror* does indeed mirror the law in both town and country. In the many *Mirror* versions the concerns and language of the laws are much more straightforward than in other types of texts. As far as anyone can determine, no one taking part in the long compilation and redaction process of the *Saxon Mirror* and *Schwabenspiegel* versions was writing specifically with any single, local faction in mind. Hence they are relatively impersonal and tend not to vary greatly in their approach to the subject. Being neutral and not explicitly normative, they place the minstrel definitively on the margin of the law.

The *Saxon Mirror* mentions minstrels only a few times. This in itself indicates that they are of marginal legal concern but the law book does at least provide a

⁴ English translations unless otherwise noted are taken from *The Saxon Mirror: A Sachsenspiegel of the Fourteenth Century*, trans. by Maria Dobozy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999). The translation is based on the Wolfenbüttel manuscript (c. 1358–62), Cod. Guelf. 3.1 Aug. 2^o, Herzog August Library in Wolfenbüttel.

definition of the performer's legal status. They form a group together with the illegitimately born, and the champions (*kempfen*) who are hired to decide a legal case by combat. All are deficient in legal rights. These groups are occasionally mentioned together with criminals because of their diminished legal status:

Kempen unde er kinder, spellude, unde all de 'in' unecht geboren sin, unde de duve oder rof sunet oder weder gevet, unde se des vor gerichte verwunnen werden, oder de er lif unde hut unde har ledeget, de sin alle rechtelos. (I, 38)⁵

[Paid champions and their children, minstrels, all who are born illegitimate, and all convicted robbers and thieves who are to make restitution or have done so and were convicted of their crime are all without legal rights.]⁶

According to this statement, the legal capacity of this group is diminished for reason of birth, a dishonourable occupation, criminal conviction, or failure to stand trial. Consequently, the legal protection of minstrels is severely curtailed because *rechtlos* means they are excluded from the legal rights and privileges of a freeman. However, lack of rights is not attainder. It does not place itinerants outside the law and does not withdraw from them the right to protection under the law as outlawry does. They retain legal capacity and with it a modicum of legal protection. *Saxon Mirror* distinguishes between *rechtlos* and *echtlos*:

It is manich man rechtlos, de nicht is echtlos; went de rechtlose man mut wol echt wif nemen unde kinder bi er winnen, de em evenbordich sin, de moten wol sin erve nemen, unde er muder also, went se en evenbordich sin, se ne tweien van en mit egenscap. (I, 51)

[A person with diminished legal capacity (*rechtlos*) is in no way barred from all rights (*echtlos*) because someone with limited legal capacity can undeniably take a lawful wife and have children by her who are his equals in birth unless the children are distinguished from them through servile status.]

What the text describes here is normally categorized as a dishonourable trade.⁷ Several occupations were considered disreputable (*unecht*): champion or fighter

⁵ German citations are taken from *Sachsenspiegel. Landrecht*, ed. by Karl August Eckhardt, MGH Fontes iuris Germanici antiqui (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1973), vol. 1/1. All references to the *Saxon Mirror* and *Sachsenspiegel* are given according to book and paragraph number.

⁶ A *kemphe* was a dueler or champion by occupation, employed by the law court or by litigants to fight in a verdict by combat in place of the litigant himself. Considered a dishonourable occupation, its practitioners, like minstrels, were curtailed in their legal capacity and socially marginalized as well (see Danckert, pp. 9–15).

⁷ See K.-S. Kramer's article on this specific category in which he states (apparently erroneously) that this concept unique to medieval law, 'Ehrliche/unehrliche Gewerbe', *HRG*, vol. 1, col. 855–58. Nevertheless, loss of certain rights stigmatizes and implies immorality as well. For discussions of the meaning of dishonourable see Adolf Mönckeberg *Die Stellung der*

(*kemphe*), prostitute (*fahrend wip*), and minstrel (*spilman*, *spillute*). This modicum of legal capacity allows a minstrel to bring a complaint or injury before a court according to the laws regulating freemen. In comparison, women are able legally to bring only a complaint of rape to court without a guardian. Since women need a male guardian, most laws in the *Saxon Mirror* refer only to men (hence my use of the masculine pronoun). In cases of serious crimes such as rape, murder or robbery, there is no composition for minstrels, but the perpetrators are to be tried and penalized the same as for injury to a person of any other status:

Ane wergelt sin unechte lude; doch swe er enen gewundet oder rovet oder dodet, oder unechte wif nodeget unde den vrede an ene brikt, men scal over ene richten na vredes rechte. (III, 47)

[People with diminished legal capacity have no *wergeld*. However, if anyone robs, injures, or slays one of these people, or if someone rapes a woman with reduced legal capacity and violates the peace against her, he shall be judged according to the peace law.]

Lacking rights had numerous serious consequences. A minstrel was not eligible to be judge, witness or a member of the judiciary. He lacked the right to appeal a decision or judgment, the right to indemnity and *wergeld*. But having limited rights primarily meant lack of credibility, which was the most serious deficiency because it denied him the right to use normal channels for a defence if criminal charges were brought against him because he could not clear himself with a cleansing oath. As a result, only the ordeal by fire or water was available to him for his own defence in court.⁸ In addition, since itinerants normally owned little or no property or often travelled outside of their parish, they could not be held accountable in the same way as those constantly at home. Regardless of lineage then, entering the dishonourable trade of entertainer was seen as forfeiture of full freeman privileges and credibility. According to some territorial and city laws, if the son of a freeman who enjoyed all the rights of his birth became a minstrel, he was disinherited. For example, the Viennese city code (c. 1287), Art. 108 states:

Es mag ein chind seines vater und seiner mueter erib wol verwürchen mit vierzechen dingen. [...] Das neunt ist, ob der sun ein spilman wirt wider des vater willen, daz er guet für er nimpt, und daz der vater al sein tag ein erman ist gewesen.

[Fourteen actions can cause a child to forfeit its inheritance from father or mother.[...] The ninth occurs when a son becomes a minstrel against the father's will so that he

Spielleute im Mittelalter (Berlin: Rothschild, 1910), pp. 5–6; Hartung, *Fahrende*, pp. 148–53, and specifically with respect to minstrels, Scheele's article, '*Spillute*'.

⁸ *Saxon Mirror* I, 50, 51.

accepts goods in return for prestige when the father was an honourable person all his life].⁹

This law can certainly be viewed as an attempt to discourage people from performing. It presupposes the concept of disreputable trade and with it, partial loss of freeman status and with it the right to inherit.

In cases where minstrels suffer lesser injuries inflicted by another freeman, they are nevertheless eligible to receive damages if the court decides in their favour which means that legally they are not of servile status. In practice, however, compensation is symbolic to the extent that the perpetrators are required to pay court fees and a fine to the judge, but the minstrels themselves receive essentially no material compensation. They are denied compensation in this law because they are considered partially unfree as the *Saxon Mirror* also states: *Spelluden unde alle den, de sek to egene geven, dene gift men to bute den scaden enes mannes.[...] Unechter lude bute gevet al luttel vromen, unde sin doch dar umme gesat, dat der bute des richteres gewedde volge.* [Minstrels and all those who have given themselves into bondage are awarded the shadow of a man [...]. The indemnity fine awarded to illegitimate people is of little use but is nevertheless stipulated so that the judge's fee may be collected subsequently. (III, 46)] Important here is the phrase *sek to egene geven* that defines minstrels and champions as having forfeited freeman status and placed themselves in bondage. They are considered less than freemen but not definitively bondmen either, so they are between two distinct legal categories. *Sek to egene geven* is a product of the same attitudes as found in the Vienna code listed above that refuses performers their inheritance and with it a definite place in the legal system. That law presupposes also a second statement in the *Saxon Mirror* in which a person may give himself into bondage as long as he does not lose or forfeit property that should go to the heirs. (III, 33)¹⁰ The Viennese law simply ensures that no heirs (except the minstrel) lose property. Even though the laws regarding minstrels do not contradict one another, they remain unclear about the status of minstrels. In the last analysis minstrels simply do not fit any meaningful categories. Neither a clear moral nor social delineation can be found in the law book.

The *Saxon Mirror* tries very hard to keep *rechtelos* and *echtelos* apart in order to distinguish minstrels, paid champions and illegitimate children from convicted criminals. These non-criminals are neither fish nor fowl and as such are an embarrassment to the law. How to interpret compensation payment in the form of a shadow is secondary to the acknowledgment that performers, like the others, simply do not fit the given social categories. Most scholars writing on the *Saxon Mirror* interpret striking the shadow as a sham penalty (*Spottbuße*) that mocks the injured

⁹ *Das Wiener Stadtrechts- oder Weichbildbuch*, ed. by Heinrich Maria Schuster (Vienna: der Manz'sche Buchhandlung, 1873), Art. 108, 9, pp. 103–04. Translation mine.

¹⁰ Anyone who gives himself into servitude before a court of law may be challenged lawfully by his heir and given his freedom again, *Saxon Mirror*, III, 33.

party, the minstrel¹¹ but one may actually construe this as the malefactor's symbolic forfeiture of his soul as penalty for injuring a minstrel. Brandhorst claims that when a minstrel is permitted to strike a blow at the shadow of the convicted offender, he is symbolically striking at that person's soul.¹² If one considers that the reputation of minstrels was tainted by associations with magic and the devil, such an act prescribed by law may well have exerted a cautionary influence on some people.¹³

As III, 47, on violation of the peace proves, these laws are analogous to other laws protecting a person's body and appear to protect minstrels. Yet it is equally clear that since these occupations were considered disreputable and the people themselves transients and, therefore, morally suspect, what happened in practice may have been quite different. The stipulation of a shadow as compensation payment may have actually worked to dissuade minstrels from bringing a suit when attacked. Since we have essentially no court records involving them, the question of actual application and enforcement of laws remains unclear and cannot be confirmed. At the very least, they indicate a desire for justice.

Actually there had never been a *wergeld* for minstrels. However, by the thirteenth century and as a result of a series of land peace ordinances, the penal system had changed. The graduated system of composition payments based on the status of the injured party had by this time given way to a scale of punishments that no longer considered the social rank of either party.¹⁴ This innovation meant that legal protection was extended at least formally to minstrels and others who had previously enjoyed almost no protection. Accordingly this development in the penal code may well have increased the protection of minstrels in practice if severity of punishment is a deterrent at all. Where previously no payment or punishment had been exacted, the principle of penalizing criminal actions was now applied. Some scholars have claimed that in contrast to France and England, the legal situation in Germany did not improve for performers but this view is based on inadequate information.¹⁵ The territorial laws themselves imply that beneficial changes were taking place and that they could aid minstrels in territories with judges willing to interpret the law to the minstrel's benefit.

¹¹ See Scheele, '*Spillute*', p. 342, and Schubert p. 122.

¹² Brandhorst, p. 159.

¹³ Curiously, Christopher Page claims he has found no references in France or England that connect minstrels with magic but German sermons certainly do, *Owl*, p. 14.

¹⁴ See Dobozy, *Saxon Mirror*, pp. 21–24 and Friderich Scheele, '*Di sal man alle radebrechen*': *Todeswürdige Delikte und ihre Bestrafung in Text und Bild der Codices picturati des Sachsenspiegels*, 2 vols (Oldenburg: Isensee, 1992), vol. 1, Chapter 2.

¹⁵ R. Schulze, '*Spielleute*', *HRG*, vol. 4, col. 1766, and Moser, pp. 59–64, compare documents from the French minstrel judge until the establishment of a royal minstrel judgeship by Karl IV in 1355, but regional judgeships had existed earlier in the German speaking regions as well, see my discussion of the minstrel judge in Vienna in Chapter 4.

Additional evidence of improvements in the entertainer's legal capacity is the acquisition of the right to file a suit or complaint. The Latin laws or *leges*, influenced by the Church Fathers and official ecclesiastical sanctions in Carolingian times, had denied them this right. The Laws of Louis the Pious (or Lothar) expressly prohibited minstrels from bringing a court suit.¹⁶ By the thirteenth century, minstrels were indeed permitted to bring a complaint before a law court, although they still had no right of appeal, and by the end of that century we find many documents in which minstrels acted as witnesses in charters and legal suits.

The reason that these laws exclude minstrels has been explained by their transient way of life, and this is doubtless the single most significant factor segregating them from the rest of society. The great geographic and social mobility of minstrels made them into transients and separated them from the settled community where everyone had a fixed domicile in village or town, and where every member knew almost every other person's family and background. At the same time the legal system depended so completely on a social network of family and community ties that it was simply unable to deal with itinerants. Those who were not integrated into the community and parish or who travelled extensively, had no one to vouch for their identity or integrity. Thus all itinerants lacked reputation, credibility, and the aid of oath-helpers, namely those close relatives and friends who could support their oath. Under these circumstances being unknown, without reputation meant being disreputable. Marked as disreputable, they were essentially individuals without ties, living totally on their own resources and virtually without benefit of the law.

The consequences of this lifestyle posed a constant danger to their person, for without supporters and the protection of a social group, they could easily be convicted of a crime or simply of being a threat to the community. Yet even the emergence of a criminal code that extends protection to all people regardless of rank is not enough of a change in the legal system to be able to include minstrels. Additional evidence from the Bavarian land peace of 1256 among others demonstrates the severe limitations on law enforcement that customaries had to take into account. The text implies that outside the parish, where enforcement of the law is less feasible, minstrel groups and families are unprotected: '*spielleut, die diu wip mit in furent uzzerhalb ir pfarre, die sint uz dem fride*'. [Minstrels who take women with them outside of their parish are outside of the peace ordinance.]¹⁷

Such exclusionary laws remained in effect with relatively little modification in wording well into the sixteenth century. They pinpoint for us the conditions under which people cannot be protected. Where resources were limited, those who were valued less or who have fewer resources remain unprotected, and where the land

¹⁶ Peter Browe discusses these laws (found in MGH *Legum sectio II, Capitularia regum Francorum*, vol. 1, p. 334) in 'Die kirchliche Stellung der Schauspieler im Mittelalter', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 18 (1928) 246–57 (p. 248).

¹⁷ Cited according to Schulze, *HRG*, 4, col. 1767.

peace could not be enforced, namely outside of a castle, village or city, these warnings were necessary.

The customaries demonstrate that they are, in fact, unable to deal with minstrels directly. They are forced to formulate laws regarding entertainers as a condition of lack or deficiency. (*rechtelos, elos, echtelos*, I, 51) Entertainers and others pursuing what is labelled a disreputable trade are exceptions to the rules and are defined by what they cannot do and rights they do not possess. This is in stark contrast to women, another, often ignored group. Unlike women, whose rights and privileges are outlined in positive categories in the *Saxon Mirror* even though they lack legal capacity, minstrels are identified only by negative formulations with the suffix *-los*. Negative formulations reveal the inability of the laws to encompass the itinerant lifestyle. Scholars, too, have been unable to define minstrels in positive terms. In contrast to members of a community, minstrels are characterized as simply the opposite:

[sie] standen mit ihrer *ungeregelten und ungesicherten Lebensweise*, ihrer Heimat- und Besitzlosigkeit im krassesten Gegensatz zu der festgefühten Ordnung.

[With their *disorderly and insecure* lifestyle, their lack of hearth and property, they existed in starkest contradiction to the solidly established order.]¹⁸

In order to describe the condition of a marginal in legal terms, it is necessary to extrapolate from the laws governing persons without deficiencies where freemen are the norm and the *rechtilos* are the deviants. The only way to determine what rights were available to performers as a group and to describe them in positive terms is to assume that what is not prohibited them specifically by their classification of deficiency is indeed permitted. Based upon the formulations in the customary laws, what has frequently been called low social status and lack of rights requires a stronger reformulation. In every case involving minstrels, the customaries point out conditions in which the laws can no longer operate. They divulge, therefore, as much the inadequacies of the system as the disvalued, pariah status of the performer. Therefore, we need to recognize that minstrel activities lie essentially outside the jurisdiction and enforcement capabilities of the legal system.

Ultimately, the medieval German legal system in which any person accused of a crime relied heavily on family support and oath-helpers was not capable of regulating the actions of entertainers nor of protecting them. Thus whether their lack of legal rights is caused by marginalization, as many claim, or by their itinerancy is moot. It was the practical factor, namely the inability of law enforcement to protect minstrels that limited their rights. Their condition stems on the one hand from moral exclusion and on the other from the inability of the customary laws to accommodate performers in practice. If laws are to be of any use at all, they must necessarily

¹⁸ Emphasis mine, cited from G. Philipp, 'Leute, fahrende', *HRG*, vol. 2, col. 1861; see also Brandhorst, p. 162.

reflect the shortcomings of a system that lacks a formal means of enforcement and consequently relies on community surveillance. Performers are excluded because they do not fit the requirements of that system. These people find themselves outside the reach or protection of the law because society has no clearly defined place for them. This shortcoming in the system also implies an inability on the part of the legal system (and all of society) to place formal social value on art and entertainment. Thus what we learn is that the law book could not do otherwise than place performers on the margin.

Probably the second greatest difficulty for performers was the stigma of the dishonourable trades because their work was considered morally tainted.¹⁹ From the highest status to the lowest this classification included: barbers, shepherds, street sweepers, executioners and similarly disliked servants of the law courts, and finally, day labourers, minstrels, hired champions, and prostitutes. Historians claim that within the disreputable trades, the lowest levels—minstrels, hired champions and prostitutes—were further stigmatized by the practice of accepting monetary payment for services.²⁰ The legal phrase describing these people as those *de sek to egene geven* refers to the three listed groups who give up their freeman status to allow others to dispose over their person. Their submission places them in a position of quasi serfdom. Consequently, it is condemned as inappropriate and demeaning for those who were born a free man or woman to place themselves at the disposal of another:

Denn Spielleute [...] gaben sich dadurch zu eigen, daß sie ihre Tätigkeit gegen Geld ausübten, d.h. sie verzichteten auf die Verfügungsgewalt über ihre eigene Person, indem sie sich immer wieder mit dem eigenen Leib und der damit ausgeübten Kunst vor einem launenhaften Publikum prostituierten.

[Minstrels [...] gave themselves into bondage in that they performed their work for money, meaning that they forfeited control over their own person because they prostituted themselves and their own body again and again and used it to practice their art in front of a fickle audience.]²¹

According to this view then, practising one of the disreputable trades would in itself ensure forfeiture of credibility and with it, curtailment of legal rights.²² At the

¹⁹ In contrast to others, Hans-Peter Hils maintains that individuals incur only loss of rights because their trade is defined as dishonourable, “‘Kempen unde er kinder [...] de sin alle rechtelos’ Zur sozialen und rechtlichen Stellung der Fechtmeister im späten Mittelalter’, in *Zusammenhänge, Einflüsse, Wirkungen. Kongressakten zum ersten Symposium des Mediävistenverbandes in Tübingen, 1984*, ed. by Joerg O. Fichte, Karl Heinz Göller, and Bernhard Schimmelpfennig (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986), pp. 255–71 (p. 258).

²⁰ Kramer, *HRG*, vol. 1, col. 857.

²¹ Hils, p. 260.

²² Page speculates about the meaning attached to use of money in France and finds that all

same time, the category of dishonourable trades is not clearly defined. In the *Saxon Mirror* some occupations were recognized as useful and others not.

Low status or disreputable trade by itself does not exclude an individual from the social structure for there were others who hired themselves out and in the process, found niches for their talents. For example, some domestic servants and minstrels, both temporary and long-term, also fit the description of making oneself unfree, of having someone else dispose over their person, and often, for wages; and yet they were very much part of the system because they had a master or provider who gave them an identity and protected them from the abuse of others, whereas those without such a provider did not. Hence the European itinerant minstrel's call for *Schutz und Schirm* and cry for remuneration and patronage: *doneiz nos maistres ou deniers*.²³

At this point it is also necessary to address how imagined traits could be attached to minstrels even in a matter-of-fact custumal like the *Saxon Mirror*. A relatively unbiased text, it does not dwell explicitly on any pejorative traits attributed to minstrels. For this reason it has been overlooked as a source of evidence for overt biases in its illustrations. Yet rarely does an authoritative text manifest a more obvious example of prejudice insinuated into a law without expressing it in written form. The stereotyping lies in the combination of text and image in question. A pictorial image in manuscript W illustrates a law concerning a woman who is immoral in her conduct. The text states: 'A woman can damage her reputation through unchaste conduct, but she does not thereby lose either her legal rights or her parental inheritance' (Landrecht I, 5). What concerns the law book is the legal impact of a woman's dissolute life, and the task of the illustrator is to represent this life in a readily recognizable visual image. Interaction between word and image in the illuminated manuscript tradition of the *Saxon Mirror* is very complex, but because most images in the manuscripts were selected to illustrate or in some cases to explain the text, we assume that each image was chosen with great care. This paragraph leaves marital status unspecified and the details of the unchaste conduct undescribed. The image, however, shows the woman in bed with a man in the context of fornication or adultery (see Fig. 1). It is here that the image expresses the stigma that language does not: the male chosen to illustrate the adulterer is a minstrel, identified easily by his *vielle*. Since the illustrations in the *Saxon Mirror* are never at a loss for an identifying symbol, any number of symbols would have sufficed to indicate that her bedmate was participating in an illicit sexual act. Nothing in the text either preceding or following this passage indicates that a minstrel is implied in this passage, nor does the text anywhere suggest minstrels are

persons involved with money were considered morally reprehensible but specific trades were not singled out as disreputable, *Owl*, pp. 16–17. In England, minstrels apparently did not belong to the formal category of dishonourable trades, although itinerants were stigmatized according to Richard Rastall (personal communication).

²³ Cited in Edmond Faral, *Les Jongleurs en France au moyen âge* (1919; Paris: Champion, 1964), p. 122.



Fig. 1. A woman in bed with a man. The vielle identifies him as a minstrel, from the *Sachsenspiegel*, 1358–62, Cod. Guelf. 3.1 Aug. 2°, folio 12^r, Landrecht I, 5. Reproduced by permission of the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Germany.

fornicators. Nevertheless the illustrator did not shy away from selecting a minstrel to illustrate the woman's misdeeds and placing him in a compromising situation. In addition, the picture connects minstrels clearly with the word field of adultery, fornication, and moral turpitude. Of course, depicting a woman who has chosen a minstrel as lover further denigrates her as well. Thus the image of the minstrel in this picture can have several functions, one of which stereotypes him as lascivious and perhaps an adulterer.²⁴

However damning some of these attitudes and however precarious the legal protection, pariah status did not greatly diminish minstrels' access to audiences. The performances most of these entertainers put on were successful to the extent that people wanted them and paid for them. But even though a number of individuals found audiences and prospered, the performer's marginalization points to the difficulty of placing value on secular art and performance, especially because the Church actively discouraged laity and clergy alike from supporting artists and performers.

The Ecclesiastical Record

The ecclesiastical record is the authoritative voice of the Church. Its content, the set of carefully documented decrees collected over centuries as the institution of the Church grew, is much more complex than the territorial law books. Church councils met to define the Church, that is, the community of believers, and in the process, they established rules of moral conduct to guide people in conforming to norms and ideals. It is their purpose, therefore, to regulate the activity of the community and to define its norms. For ultimately, all texts connected with the Church, whether sober records of Church Councils or passionate exhortations to a moral and pious life written by moral theologians, are concerned with defining and regulating the Christian community. The ecclesiastical record, an impersonal source, represents a consensus of Churchmen. Each council derived its authority from their combined, official judgments, and consequently, the directives of the ecclesiastical record produced in this way influenced the entire clergy. Much of canonical legislation consistently reiterates what was said earlier. This practice signals either that the situation persists, or that a prestigious tradition is being followed.

²⁴ Surprisingly, this calumny has gone unnoticed. Scheele says the image is merely a sign of the illustrator's excellent legal knowledge, '*Spillute*', p. 353. Examples are numerous that even today people distrust delivery people and traveling salesmen. Even those with a fixed route are suspect because it is easy to judge them without proof. In the US in the 1950s and 60s jokes about a woman's children resembling the milkman instead of the husband were popular.

With respect to minstrels, the decrees are consistently and consciously hostile towards performers. They present two general areas of concern, each of which developed differently: the one excludes minstrels from the community of believers, and the other regulates the clergy's association with any kind of performer. Some official Church decisions did change over time, of course. By the twelfth century the Church revised some of its early rulings against minstrels and no longer excommunicated them. On the other hand, the councils and synods continued warning clergy of all ranks time and again to avoid minstrel performances throughout the primary period under discussion (1150–1400). In the end the councils were just as unsuccessful in controlling the life-style of entertainers as they were in curbing the clergy.

Originally the question of who belonged to the community of Christians was answered by the Church Fathers. They denounced performers of all types who were already of dubious repute in Roman culture and severely condemned public entertainments because they were rooted in a Greek and Roman tradition from which Christianity had to be explicitly set apart.²⁵ John Chrysostom and Augustine of Hippo among others quickly seized upon minstrelsy and easily fashioned it into a general symbol that distinguished the mores of the early Christian community from that of non-believers. They presented three major objections that continued to stigmatize performers for centuries: they objected to the pagan content of public performances (associating it with idolatry), the dissolute lifestyle of the minstrels themselves, and the corrupting influence on spectators.²⁶ Minstrels, like prostitutes, were unusual in that they could be stigmatized and their work censured apparently because their work was not considered necessary for the survival of society. In other words, minstrels were thought to serve no social function. Consequently it became convenient to use public performers as a symbol for the boundary between Christianity and what lay outside. Augustine refers to actors and prostitutes and other such people of depravity asserting that they are rightly denied the sacraments:

Illud sane mirabile est, quod fratres, qui aliter sapiunt, cum debeant ab ista vel nova vel vetere, perniciose tamen opinione discedere, ipsi insuper dicunt novam esse doctrinam, qua nequissimi homines in suis flagitiis se perseveraturos in propatulo profitentes non admittuntur ad baptismum: quasi nescio ubi peregrinentur, quando meretrices et histriones, et quilibet alii publicae turpitudinis professores, nisi solutis

²⁵ See Millet Henshaw for a thorough discussion of the denigration of minstrels in early Christianity, 'The Attitude of the Church Toward the Stage to the End of the Middle Ages', *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 7 (1952), 3–17. On Augustine's position regarding performances, especially theatre, see the lengthy study by Werner Weismann, *Kirche und Schauspiele. Die Schauspiele im Urteil der lateinischen Kirchenväter unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Augustin* (Würzburg: Augustinus, 1972).

²⁶ For an extensive study on Chrysostom's attacks on performers, see Blake Leyerle, *Theatrical Shows and Ascetic Lives: John Chrysostom's Attack on Spiritual Marriage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

aut disruptis talibus vinculis, ad christiana sacramenta non permittuntur accedere qui utique secundum istorum sententiam omnes admitterentur, nisi antiquum et robustum morem sancta ecclesia retineret, ex illa scilicet, liquidissima veritate venientem, qua certum habet, quoniam qui talia agunt, regnum Dei non possidebunt, et nisi egerint ab his mortuis operibus paenitentiam, accedere ad baptismum non sinuntur.²⁷

[And one thing I find amazing: certain brothers who know better, while they should disagree with this opinion (whether new or old, but nevertheless dangerous), they moreover regard as an innovation the teaching, according to which one should not admit to baptism those most dissolute persons who publicly confess that they would persist in their shameful acts [even after being baptized]. I don't know where they are headed when harlots and actors and all other dealers in public obscenity are not admitted to Christian sacraments unless such impediments are removed. According to them [these brothers], all these would be admitted [to baptism] if the Holy Church did not retain its ancient and firm custom. Evidently, this [custom] springs from the clearest truth, which holds for certain that those who practice such trades shall not inherit the kingdom of God and are not permitted to receive baptism unless they repent of these deadly works.]²⁸

Not concerned with elaborating the details of what these stage performers and prostitutes do, Augustine simply brands the entire category dissolute and guilty of mortal sins. These two groups are singled out as specific examples among any number of 'dealers in public obscenity' he might have chosen. The stain of prostitution and moral turpitude, a frequent topos, is particularly damning because it ascribes to every individual member guilt by association that cannot be disproved. Consequently, when Augustine connects actors with prostitutes, the terms suffice to exclude any person so labelled from the sacraments. His insistence that performers give up their metier in order to be baptized may be explained by the early paradigms of conversion: the very first converts, the prostitute (Mary Magdalen) and the thief (crucified next to Christ) demonstrated the power of grace when they repented their former depraved ways.

When the early Church councils defined minstrels in statements regulating status and conduct, they cast out performers explicitly from the community of the faithful. And this exclusion, although the excommunication was eventually lifted, never really allowed minstrels to become full members of the Church. Early in the fourth century councils condemned minstrel activities. Performers were discredited and stigmatized in two contexts: one placed them in the lowest status of society in a legal

²⁷ Augustine, *De fide et operibus*, Chapter 18, PL 40, col. 219.

²⁸ Gregory J. Lombardo's translation reads: 'But go where they will, they will not find anywhere that the Church admits to her sacraments prostitutes, actors, or any disreputable person unless he first abandon his evil ways' in *St Augustine on Faith and Works*, ed. and trans. by Gregory J. Lombardo (New York: Newman Press, 1988), p. 41.

context together with heretics and pagans as in the synod of Carthage (419).²⁹ The second context singles out a disreputable trade or occupation, even though no definition is given. According to an early decision at the Council of Arles (314), the category of performer is considered a profession like a charioteer or race driver and is coupled with the accusation of sinful behaviour and possibly lack of faith. The Council of Arles explicitly excommunicated performers:

Ut aurigae, dum agitant, excommunicentur. De agitatoribus qui fideles sunt, placuit eos quamdiu agitant a communione separari. Ut theatrici, quamdiu agunt, excommunicentur. De theatricis et ipsos placuit quamdiu agunt a communione separari.³⁰

[Charioteers should be excommunicated as long as they practice their profession. On the subject of Christian race drivers, it has been decided that they should be kept from communion as long as they practice. Theatre performers (*theatrici*) also should be excommunicated as long as they practice their profession. About performers (*theatrici*) and the like, it has also been decided to deny them communion as long as they act.]

The decree makes a small concession to Christian drivers by not excommunicating them, thereby implying that minstrels fall into the category of non-believers. Linking paganism to performance as an occupation condemns all actions of minstrels as they go about making a living. Individual actions or traits are not listed so that minstrels are incriminated as a category. Naming the profession allows convenient reference to performers without needing to specify what they do or who they are. Once stigmatized morally in this manner, minstrelsy is prohibited; to practice it becomes the equivalent of religious disobedience or heresy. Thus by definition, their actions mark that which lies beyond the proper and licit Christian life.

²⁹ In analogy to typical class regulations in Roman law, the decision in Carthage prohibited minstrels from bringing a case against someone of a higher status or class: *Item placuit, ut omnes servi vel proprii liberti ad accusationem non admittantur [...] omnes etiam infamiae maculis aspersi, i.e. histriones ac turpitudinibus subjectae personae, haeretici etiam sive pagani sive Iudaei; sed tamen omnibus, quibus accusatio denegatur, in causis propriis accusandi licentia non neganda* (cited according to Browe, p. 247). (It has also been resolved that slaves shall not be admitted to bring accusation nor freedmen accuse their former masters [...] neither shall those be admitted who are stained with the marks of infamy, for example, actors (*histriones*) and persons subjected to moral baseness, further heretics, be they pagans or Jews. But nevertheless, permission to accuse within their own class shall not be denied to those who have been refused the right to bring accusation [in the above cases]). See also Henshaw, p. 10.

³⁰ Concilium Arelatense I, Johannes Dominicus Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et amplissima collectio* (Graz: Akademischer Druck und Verlagsanstalt, 1961), vol. 2, col. 470–71. Hereafter abbreviated as Mansi with canon, volume and column number.

Penalties imposed by the Church are intended to correct and reintegrate the sinners into the community of believers. Thus the issue of the effects and the enforcement of excommunication is complex. Even though a number of councils actually excommunicated entertainers, there were always provisions for bringing them back into the flock as the synod of Carthage (397) attests:

Ut scenicis atque histrionibus, ceterisque hujusmodi personis vel apostaticis, conversis vel reversis ad dominum gratia vel reconciliatio non negetur.

[That to stage performers and actors and to other persons of this kind or to apostates neither grace nor reconciliation shall be denied if they convert or return to the Lord.]³¹

Here it becomes clearer that pursuing the occupation of performer was considered disobedience. The condition for reconciliation and readmission was repentance, of course, but for entertainers, it meant giving up performing. This was a particularly harsh dictum because it meant giving up their entire way of life. For this reason, then, what the Church offered was not a meaningful settlement for those who were committed to the performing arts. The price to be paid for becoming a minstrel was, unfortunately, exclusion from the religious community. But only the very early Church councils excommunicated performers.³² Regardless of the fact that excommunication as a tactic was abandoned, minstrels remained pariah.

It was quite easy for councils to designate certain groups to be excommunicated. However, the execution and especially enforcement of such canons was impossible to oversee. And how strictly any council decisions concerning minstrels were carried out cannot be determined. First of all, excommunication tended to be applied by a bishop in his diocese and only infrequently on a broad scale. For this reason, excommunication as such is rarely discussed in ecumenical councils except in the case of heresy. Never intended as a permanent condition of expulsion, it was supposed to guide the penitent back to the community. The person who strove for successful reconciliation and readmission to the Church and the sacraments had to renounce a life of transgression. Such a measure was considered necessary together with penance for the moral improvement of the individual.

Regardless of the condemnation and vilification, performing survived as an occupation, and minstrels continued to perform before audiences so that excommunication was eventually dropped. As times changed, performance styles also changed, and venues became smaller and more private. Despite these changes,

³¹ Carthage, Chapter 35, Mansi, vol. 3, col. 885. I translate *histrion* here as in all in early texts as ‘actor’. The term continues to be used throughout the centuries even after the modes and styles of performance have changed drastically. In medieval texts (c. 1160–1400) I translate it consistently as ‘minstrel’.

³² No study, old or recent, has been able to cite any medieval canons (post 900) that excommunicate minstrels, see Henshaw, p. 8, Browe, p. 248, Schubert, p. 116, and Schreier-Hornung, pp. 68–72.

Church opposition to performers remained firmly grounded in the proscriptions of the Church Fathers. Conversely, the private venues made it more difficult to regulate performers. Thus it is to be expected that in official Church writings minstrels are repeatedly enjoined to give up performing altogether.

The official ruling requiring minstrels to give up performing builds on an important insight: minstrelsy is a way of life and not strictly a trade. The art and work of the performer cannot be neatly separated from his daily life; indeed, it pervades many forms of behaviour and social activities. In public, these people are almost always in performance mode, and rarely totally out of a role, not even when among themselves. In short, there is no 'normal' work routine as there is for a cobbler and no time when a performer is not in some way affected by learned performance behaviour.³³ If this is true, then the councils and bishops are consistent in their demands. A minstrel cannot be admitted to the sacraments until he or she is transformed. At that point, however, that person is no longer a minstrel. Ultimately, it was the refusal of minstrels to stop performing that continued to fuel the vituperative condemnation by ecclesiastics because they viewed the minstrels as recalcitrant and unrepentant in their ways.

Scholars, noting that the Church canons abandoned the strategy of excommunicating minstrels, interpreted this change as leniency toward performers. Several who studied the status of minstrels maintain that a significant liberalization towards entertainers occurred throughout Europe during the twelfth century.³⁴ Hannes Kästner and Antonia Schreier-Hornung note a change in minstrel status, and an amelioration of their condition taking shape between 1150 and 1215. This they claim is visible in the ecclesiastical record after entertainers were dropped from the list of excommunicates.³⁵ Supposedly the council of Lateran IV (1215) marks the turning point in the lot of entertainers.³⁶ Christopher Page finds a parallel development in England and France and actually calls it 'emancipation,' but he bases his evaluation

³³ Richard Schechner, in speaking of movie stars, has formulated a modern, yet relevant comparison: 'One is never sure how much of the "star personality" is genuine, and how much put on. The star is usually not sure, either. A stereotyped mask thickens and freezes—this mask is worn publicly and privately throughout life', *Performance Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 50.

³⁴ Several scholars have argued for this thesis. See Schreier-Hornung, p. 73, and G. Philipp, 'Leute, fahrende' *HRG*, 2, col. 1858–65. For France and England, see pp. 19–28. In contrast, see Hartung, *Fahrende*, pp. 124–30, and even Schubert whose more recent and more detailed study of sources finds no evidence for change in the Church's official evaluation of minstrels and their trade, pp. 116–18.

³⁵ Hannes Kästner, *Harfe und Schwert. Der höfische Spielmann bei Gottfried von Straßburg* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1981), p. 11; Schreier-Hornung, pp. 69–73.

³⁶ Schreier-Hornung, p. 71.

on the writers of penitentials, not council records.³⁷ The arguments for his thesis can only be tested by examining the ecclesiastical record first.³⁸

To be sure the first change noticeable in the Church record is that minstrels are no longer excommunicated. In our time period, a number of councils like Corvey (1200) offer evidence that the application of excommunication has totally changed. The Corvey canons express very specific warnings about the gravity of excommunication and demonstrate how important this improvement was for minstrels:

Excommunicatio non passim & absque delectu fiat: sed praemissa canonica admonitione. Singulis autem annis in tribus solemnibus festivitibus, scilicet die Natalis, die Pentecostes, die Assumptionis B. Mariae excommunicantur in genere solemniter sortiarii, testes perjuri super sacrosancta, incendiarii, usurarii, raptores publici, malitiose impediens executionem rationabilium testamentorum, & contumaces decimarum detentores.³⁹

[Excommunication shall not happen at random, but only after an admonition required by canon law has been sent. Therefore, on the three solemn feast days of the year, namely, Christmas, Pentecost and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, the following shall be solemnly excommunicated as a group: sorcerers, witnesses who swore falsely on the sacred relics, arsonists, moneylenders, common robbers, those who maliciously prevent the execution of valid testaments, and those who stubbornly withhold the tithe.]

The visible effort to reduce the list of automatic excommunicates means that the Church is now focussing its application of this penalty on distinctly criminal behaviour, and so if minstrels as an occupation are not included, they are decriminalized. Even so, the question remains whether the lifting of excommunication also changes the church's attitude toward minstrels. Several points of evidence have been offered to demonstrate the improved status of minstrels.

Schreier-Hornung's explanation for what she sees as increasing acceptance of performers is that the Church changed its focus. If the initial goal of excommunication had been to eliminate minstrelsy, the campaign failed. By the second half of the twelfth century the Church hierarchy recognized this and was re-evaluating its own rules as penitentials were written anew to accommodate changing needs. Ernst Schubert also offers good evidence for the claim that as the Church authorities gave up trying to control minstrels, they turned their attention to the behaviour of the clergy, but without changing their general definition of minstrels as

³⁷ Page, p. 19.

³⁸ See my critique of Page and my discussion of Thomas of Chobham and Thomas Aquinas in the section on 'Individual Authoritative Voices' below.

³⁹ *Concilium incerti loci, ex MS Corbejensi* XLIX (1200), Mansi, vol. 22, col. 729.

pariah.⁴⁰ The Church hierarchy attended to keeping its own house in order, and this meant that Alexander III and Innocent III were trying to maintain the unity of the Church not only against heretics and schismatics but also to regulate the clergy.⁴¹ With these issues in the fore, decrees referring to the status of *histrion*, *mimus*, and *joculator* are much less frequent than in earlier records. Furthermore, Lateran IV canons reveal the Church's shift in focus away from minstrels per se as it attempts to guide its own priests and monks back to proper moral conduct.⁴² Although similar canons are traceable from the fifth to the fourteenth century, the milder language of Lateran IV has been thought indicative of a new leniency towards performers. The decrees of this council indeed contain quite reserved phrasing when correcting and admonishing both priests and prelates. Canon 16 states what clergy are not allowed to do, and then Canon 17 reveals more through innuendo than explicit mention the scandalous proportions of priestly misbehaviour. Here again, prohibitions are recorded according to the nexus of activities and places commonly associated with minstrels:

Clerici officia vel commercia saecularia non exerceant, maxime inhonesta, mimis, jocularioribus, et histrionibus non intendant, et tabernas prorsus evitent, nisi forte causa necessitatis in itinere constituti; ad aleas vel taxillos non ludant, nec hujusmodi intersint.⁴³

[Priests should not practice callings or business of a secular nature, especially those that are most dishonourable (*inhonesta*). They should not watch performers (*mimi*), entertainers (*joculatores*) and minstrels (*histriones*). Let them avoid taverns altogether, unless by chance they are obliged by necessity on a journey. They should not play at games of chance or dice, nor be present at such games.]

Minstrels are often accused of playing at dice and other games of chance because they performed in taverns, so that the guidelines subtly build a nexus of activities linked to minstrels. The key word in this nexus is *inhonesta* that frequently designates minstrelsy as a disreputable profession and implies dishonest or illegal dealings but is the only denigrating term in the canon. Nevertheless, this observation cannot be interpreted as evidence of greater acceptance of minstrel activities. Rather, minstrel activities are mentioned or implied for an entirely different purpose—they function as a symbol to warn clergy who are misbehaving.

There is a second argument to support the theory of increased leniency based on the ecclesiastical record. G. Philipp bases his claim on social changes, reasoning that

⁴⁰ Schreier-Hornung, p. 116.

⁴¹ Schreier-Hornung, p. 69.

⁴² Schreier-Hornung, p. 68.

⁴³ Lateran IV, Canon 16, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. by Norman P. Tanner, 2 vols (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), vol. 1, p. 243, l. 4–7. Hereafter cited as *Decrees*.

the formation of minstrel confraternities allowed for greater leniency in the council decrees. When performers joined together to establish confraternities in the fourteenth century, the Church became more indulgent because such groups could be watched over more easily than individuals.⁴⁴ Improved surveillance and regulation certainly would be a mollifying factor in council decrees, and the minstrel brotherhoods actively sought to acquire privileges for their members, but the claim is not provable. According to this thesis based on the language of the ecclesiastical record, the increased acceptance of minstrels begins already by the beginning of the thirteenth century, but that is about a hundred years before we have any dependable evidence for the existence of confraternities of any appreciable size.⁴⁵

The question still remains: what effect did Lateran IV and the supposed increasing tolerance have on the status and image of minstrels? The discussion about possible allowable minstrel activities certainly indicates a change in overall thinking, but is not to be found in council decrees. Aside from its re-evaluation of excommunication, the ecclesiastical record offers no other evidence that the Church raised the status of minstrels or that the image of minstrels genuinely improved. I concur with Ernst Schubert: the attitude of contempt remains, and derogatory adjectives persist because the Church continues to disvalue performers and their work; it continues to use minstrels as a symbol of what lies outside the boundary of proper Christian conduct.⁴⁶ Even the restrained language of Canon 17 supports this claim. Although it avoids mentioning minstrels altogether, their presence is nevertheless distinctly felt in the activities described where the clergy pursue the very type of prohibited behaviour for which entertainers are faulted: they eat and drink in excess, and participate in lively conversation and storytelling:

Dolentes referimus quod non solum quidam minores clerici, verum etiam aliqui ecclesiarum praelati, circa comessationes superfluas et confabulationes illicitas, ut de aliis taceamus, fere medietatem noctis expendunt et somno residuum relinquentes, vix ad diurnum concentum avium excitantur, transcurrento undique continuata syncopa matutinum.⁴⁷

[We regretfully relate that not only certain minor priests but also some prelates of the church pass almost half the night in unnecessary feasting and forbidden storytelling (*confabulationes*), not to mention other things, and leaving what is left of the night for sleep, they are barely roused at the dawn chorus of the birds and pass away the entire morning in a continuous state of stupor.]⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Philipp, *HRG*, vol. 2, col. 1861.

⁴⁵ On the establishment of confraternities, see Chapter 4 where I describe in more detail the brotherhoods in Vienna and Alsace.

⁴⁶ Schubert, p. 116.

⁴⁷ *Decrees*, p. 243, Canon 17.

⁴⁸ I translate *confabulationes* as storytelling, narration; *confabula* translates as *maere*,

The field of associations created by the text is significant. The scene—a banquet—raises the expectation of accompaniment with instrumental music, and diners participating in conversational pastimes such as songs, anecdotes, and stories (*confabulatio*). Entertainment of this kind is typically within the purview of minstrels and suggests that on occasion, they are present. The prohibition and the derogatory remarks (*superfluas, illicitas*) thus function to discredit clergy first of all, but also singers and their performances (songs). The banqueting also suggests *luxuria* and thus labels enjoyment of secular stories as an offence that leads to mortal sins.

Often the tellers of stories and anecdotes (i.e. the actual perpetrators) are likely to be the priests themselves and not professional entertainers. But determining who the individual transgressors are is not important here. Rather, it is important to be attentive to the nature of the offence and to its connotations because of its association with performance. The offence is particularly reprehensible because of the implied simile: priests conduct themselves like performers. When read in this manner, the passage exposes a clergy who have stepped outside of Christianity by acting like minstrels. That there were even more reprehensible activities is suggested by ‘not to mention other things’. The sequence of information is important: if the scene has been set for extravagance and frivolous, secular entertainment, then a graver wickedness is expected to follow, and so the reader has been primed for imagining the other things not mentioned. The fact that the genuinely serious, unspeakable actions are not delineated allows the minstrel activities to stand in for all kinds of insinuated, certainly imaginable, evils. Used in this way, minstrelsy is perpetuated as a symbol of illicit and dissolute behaviour. The stigma remains unchanged.

An additional part of the official record—with evidence from Germany—has not yet been considered in order to answer the question of what, if any, leniency can be found in the record and what effect it had on minstrels *vis à vis* the Church. Since minstrels remained pariah, prelates had the right to withhold the sacraments from them in accordance with ecclesiastical decrees.⁴⁹ The councils of Liège in 1287 and Cambrai 1300 prohibit minstrels from receiving sacraments:

‘story’ and *confabulari* as *favelen*, ‘to tell fables’ according to Diefenbach, p. 141. Schreier-Hornung argues using a number of examples that *confabulatio* refers to courtly romance and also cites examples that the Church used the term *confabulationes* in a derogatory fashion to refer to secular stories or songs like Arthurian romances, pp. 75–77.

⁴⁹ Banning minstrels from communion was actually not unusual. Peter the Chanter, who is often cited as being liberal when he discusses the function of minstrels, rigorously prohibits minstrels from the Eucharist. See John Baldwin, *Masters, Princes and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter the Chanter and his Circle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), vol. 1, p. 200.

Nullus fidelis arcendus est a Communione, nisi excommunicatus, vel interdictus, vel ab aliquo notorio crimine notatus; videlicet publicae meretrices, mimi, histriones, usurarii notorii.⁵⁰

[None of the faithful may be excluded from communion except those who are under excommunication or interdict or are marked by a serious crime, namely public prostitutes (*meretrices*), performers (*mimi*), minstrels (*histriones*), and publicly known usurers.]

This strict treatment, even criminalization of minstrels was not repeated frequently, nor was it necessarily acted upon rigorously, but it persisted. In 1252 the bishop of Strasbourg did not permit minstrels to be paid; they were allowed to be given foodstuffs only.⁵¹ The Church hierarchy continued its campaign to vilify minstrels in Germany at least well into the sixteenth century when the Synods of Regensburg 1512 and Augsburg 1517 still refused to admit performers to the sacraments.⁵² Thus I find no significant change in the Church's official attitude towards performers in the Church record. The regional synods remain consistent with the Councils in their stereotyping of minstrelsy.⁵³

As with excommunication, it was up to the bishop to decide whether to follow the canons strictly in every case and refuse minstrels admission to communion. Church prelates could be unrelentingly harsh. Although prohibiting performers from communion would by itself not be considered excommunication, the conditions stipulated by bishops for readmission followed the principle of the earlier canons that minstrels were expected to give up performing. Many German bishops throughout the centuries may have refused to admit minstrels to communion, but I have found information about specific cases only from the fifteenth century. Since such prohibitions were not unusual, it is reasonable to assume that they occurred between 1200 and 1400 as well. When Johann Bishop of Eichstätt (1445–64) barred minstrels from the sacraments, he was reiterating the views of Augustine and also voicing the official position of the ecclesiastical records and penitentials. Sacraments are to be refused:

⁵⁰ *Statuta Synodalia Joannis, episcopi Leodiensis*, c. 48, cited according to *Concilia Germaniae*, ed. by P. Josephus Hartzheim and Cl. Joannes Fridericus Schannat (Cologne: Krakamp, 1759–61), vol. III, p. 692. Cited hereafter as Hartzheim with volume and page number. This ruling is repeated almost verbatim at the council of Cambrai in 1300, IV, p. 73.

⁵¹ Mentioned by Martin Vogeis, *Quellen und Bausteine zu einer Geschichte der Musik und des Theaters im Elsaß 500–1800* (Strasbourg: Le Roux, 1911), p. 45.

⁵² For Regensburg, see Hartzheim, VI, p. 114 *omnes qui infamem vitam ducunt, ut sunt ioculatores, histriones* (All those who lead a dishonourable life, they are entertainers and minstrels).

⁵³ Browe, p. 253.

denen die ein verläumbt Leben führen, als Gauckler, Zauberer, öffentlich Scholderer, öffentlich Loder und gelohnt sundlich spielleuth, gemeinen Frauen und ihren Wirthen [...] so lang biß daß sie von ihrem sundlichen Leben *gänzlich* gelassen und darüber ihr aufgesetzte Bueß verbracht haben (my emphasis).⁵⁴

[to all those who lead a disgraceful life as jugglers, magicians, public gamblers, street performers (loder) and paid, sinful minstrels, streetwalkers and their procurers [...] as long as they do not give up *completely* their sinful way of life and complete the prescribed penance for it.]

Johann von Eichstätt can rely on the ecclesiastical record that has already defined performers as pursuing a sinful way of life and, therefore, has no need of explaining specific actions and traits. The designations the Bishop of Eichstätt listed are left uncharacterized; they are symbols of a sinful life and do not refer to any particular set of activities. *Spielleute* or *Fahrender* are the terms that come to embody the illicit. To read Bishop Johann's statement and the Church's strict view of reconciliation as an attempt to incorporate minstrels would be incorrect, however. The Church's conditions for admission to the sacraments underscore the fact that minstrels were defined as living in breach of Christian conduct and lifestyle. And the sanctions against performance and especially the remedies for the performers appear to be calculated to eliminate the occupation of performer altogether.

Johann von Eichstätt was not alone in his views. Access to the sacraments continued to be a subject of dispute because minstrels apparently considered themselves members of the Church. But if no one could step in to help minstrels in Eichstätt, the situation was different in the upper Rhineland where minstrel brotherhoods were flourishing by the mid-fourteenth century. They stepped in to protect and support members when sacraments were denied them. A boon for minstrels came when Cardinal Julian Cesarini, the papal legate during the Council of Basel (1431–37), procured a papal dispensation for a few minstrel brotherhoods. The brotherhoods in the diocese of Konstanz, containing the Minstrel Brotherhood of the Blessed Virgin of Riegel, and the diocese of Basel containing the Alsatian Brotherhood of Pipers in Wilr were two of the known beneficiaries. It remains unclear however, how much influence the minstrel organizations themselves and how much their noble patrons wielded in this effort.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, it was a terribly important document for minstrel organizations because many referred to it in later years when pleading their right to communicate.⁵⁶ In addition, this type of

⁵⁴ Johann Heinrich de Falckenstein, *Codex diplomat. Antiquitatum Nordgaviensium*, Francofurti et Lipsiae 1733, App. 75; cited according to Browe, p. 257.

⁵⁵ Moser attributes to Schmassmann von Rappoltstein the initiative for requesting the dispensation from Pope Eugene IV, pp. 77–78. See also Browe, pp. 255–56.

⁵⁶ The dispensation admitting minstrels to communion was renewed several times: Johann IV in Basel (1423–36), Heinrich IV in Constance (1436–62) and was requested again by Wilhelm von Rappoltstein in 1461. See Moser, p. 78 and Wilhelm's letter cited below.

dispensation appears to have been infrequent or easily ignored because in March, 1445 the vicar general in Konstanz found it necessary to write to the deacon in Binsdorf who had refused communion to a member of the Riegel Brotherhood. The vicar general had to explain that these minstrels were in possession of a special dispensation:

Vicarius etc. decano in Binssdorff salutem in domino. Conquestionibus Petri Kindhart fistulatoris subditi tui accepimus, quod licet dudum fistulatores, tubicines et mimi societatis beate Marie in ecclesia parochiali in Riegel Constantienis diocesis gratiam specialem a reverendissimo in Christo patre et domino domino Juliano miseratione divina apostolice sedis tunc per germaniam legato consecuti fuerint. quod ipsis et singulis eorum anno quolibet in festo Paschali confessis et contritis in communione fidelium existentibus divinissimum eucharistie sacramentum ministrari posset et ecclesiarum curati, sub quorum cura ipsos degere contigerit, illud ministrare debeant, dummodo per quindecim dies ante huiusmodi sacramenti perceptionem et totidem alios dies post illius suscepcionem ab officiorum suorum et servilium operum exercitiis abstinerent et id eis specialiter inhiberi non contigerit, auctoritate legationis sue consecuti fuerint.⁵⁷

[The vicar general to the deacon of Binsdorf, greetings in the Lord. As a result of a [legal] complaint initiated by Petrus Kindhart, the piper, your subject, we have learned that notwithstanding the fact that the pipers, trumpeters and minstrels of the Brotherhood of the Blessed Mary at the parish church in Riegel, the diocese of Konstanz had procured a long time ago a special dispensation from the most reverend in Christ, father and lord Julian, who was at that time appointed through divine grace as legate of the apostolic see in Germany. He gave dispensation to these people [as a whole corporation] and to every one of them, that after they had confessed their sins and shown repentance amidst the community of believers, every year during the Easter feast, the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist may be administered to them by the priests of the churches under whose supervision these people happen to live. This on the sole condition that for fifteen days prior to receiving this sacrament and for as many days after receiving it they should abstain from practising their trade as well as from vile works. They have achieved by the authority of the legate that they should not be set apart [on account of their trade] and prohibited from this [sacrament].]

The vicar general's approach to the problem of access to the sacraments is still based on the familiar assumption that minstrelsy constitutes a sinful, depraved way of life, but at least he no longer makes an impossible demand. It is imperative that individuals in the diocese be admitted to communion minimally once a year at Easter, and for this privilege performers are compelled to refrain from performing for two weeks prior to and two weeks after communion. Eventually that waiting period was shortened to five days prior and five days after the feast.

⁵⁷ Cited according to Aloys Schulte, 'Die Pfeifferbruderschaft zu Riegel im Breisgau', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, 41 (1887) 303–12, (p. 308). See also Browe, p. 256.

Once the minstrel brotherhoods had this dispensation in hand, their access to sacraments was still barred by the hierarchy. The brotherhoods had to renew this boon formally for their members from each new bishop. For example, Count Wilhelm of Rappoltstein had, on the basis of the papal dispensation, acquired a written permit from his bishop in Basel that admitted the minstrels of the Alsatian Brotherhood to the sacraments. But when that bishop was replaced, the permit needed to be reconfirmed by the newly elected bishop of Basel in 1461, and Wilhelm wrote as follows:

Dem hochwurdigen herren hern Johannsen bisschoff ze Basel, mynem gnedigen herren *schreibt Wilhelm, Herr zu Rappoltstein und zu Hohenack, unter Hinweis auf sein vom Reiche zu Lehen rührendes Recht* einen pffifer konig uber alle varende lute zwueschen dem Houwenstein und Hagenower vorst ze setzenn: Do hant ettliche pffifer vorziten ein bruoderschaft gehebt zuo Wilr in Abrechts thal, die darnach gan Sletzstat und yetz von Sletzstat zuo Rappoltswilr in uwerem bistuom geleit ist. Nuo ist inen vormals durch einen bapstlichen legaten gego(e)nnet und durch bisschoff Johannsen, uweren vorfaren seligen bestetiget worden, das man inen ir kristliche rechte und das heyilige sacrament geben und tuon solle also andern kristenn luten, des inen von iren kilcherren inntrag beschicht. *Demgemäss bittet er den Adressaten die betreffenden gonnungsbriefe, welche der Überbringer dieses Schreibens ihm vorlegen werde, genedicklichen anzesehenn und die forter zuo bestetigenn mit emphelhniß an den kilcherren, daz man sy beware und versehe nach cristenlichen rechten ungehindert irs pffiffen, damitte sy ir narunge suochen und sich began mu(e)ssent.* Datum sexta post Bartholomei: 1461 August 28.⁵⁸

[To his excellency the Lord Johann, Bishop of Basel, my gracious lord. *Wilhelm, Lord of Rappoltstein and Hohnack writes referring to the imperial fief and the power thereby invested in him to name a piper king over all the minstrels between Houwenstein and the Hagenower forest. A long time ago a number of pipers established a brotherhood in Wilr in Albrechtstal, and after that in Schlettstadt and now [expanded] from Schlettstadt to Rappoltswilr located in your bishopric. A while ago they were given the privilege by the papal legate that was then confirmed by Bishop Johann your blessed predecessor, that they are to receive their Christian rights and holy sacraments just as other Christians, as is dispensed to them by their priests. Accordingly he respectfully requests the addressee to take a look at the letter of dispensation which the messenger is to give him with this letter and further requests that he confirm with compliments to the clergy that they support them [minstrels] and provide them with their Christian rights without hindering their piping with which they must obtain their food and support themselves.*]

The count's request emphasizes the fact that minstrels are Christians and are to be given their rights as Christians (*ir kristliche rechte*). But fruitful though this letter was for the members of this specific brotherhood, it is also very telling. As

⁵⁸ Italicized narrative segments were added by the editor, Karl Albrecht, *Rappoltsteinisches Urkundenbuch 759–1500* (Colmar: Barth, 1891–96), vol. 4, p. 269, no. 704.

individuals or as a group, minstrels without noble patronage continued to be highly vulnerable because the Church itself made it difficult for performers to assert their rights directly. It was Count Wilhelm of Rappoltstein's task to write officially to the bishop and to intercede for the minstrels because the appointed minstrel judge, variously called a *Spielgraf* or *Pfeifferköng*, was unable to approach the bishop himself. Hence this letter also cautions scholars not to attribute too much power to the minstrel brotherhoods because these minstrels, even though they were organized, could not speak for themselves and, therefore, had no identity independent of their patron. It is truly remarkable and a sign of the deplorable status of minstrels that at this late a date they needed the support of the Count of Rappoltstein, their lord and legal advocate, even though their brotherhood had by this time existed under the aegis of the Counts for over a hundred years.

Reprise

What we have learned thus far from the relatively objective laws both secular and ecclesiastical, is that performers were marginals because their lifestyle did not fit the norms laid out by society. In some of the cases outlined in the *Saxon Mirror*, performers come into conflict with society because certain aspects of minstrel activity, most prominently itinerancy, mark the limits of territorial jurisdiction and law enforcement. In this case, a minstrel's reduction of rights in the *Saxon Mirror* is a result of society's inability to deal with itinerancy. It is thus possible to conclude that a minstrel's debased status and curtailed rights grow primarily out of society's definition of its own norms and boundaries. When the *Saxon Mirror* defined minstrelsy as a trade, it formulated a category that accorded at least some security to performers, however poorly it defined the concept of dishonourable trade. Hence the territorial laws never actually excluded minstrels, they marginalized them. Finally, what the minstrel pictured in the law book demonstrates is that when society defines itself and sets the norm, any deficiency, any deviation is burdened with pejorative connotations. It also indicates that minstrels suffered much more denigration from society in general than these law books reveal.

Conflict with the Church had different grounds. The Church was responsible for the morality of its members and so, initially, it excluded minstrels from membership because it perceived them to be immoral and obdurate in their sinful way of life. In late Antiquity the Christian Fathers wanted to eliminate public performances and bring the performers into the Church. Even though gradually public theatres were replaced by private venues, the types of entertainments changed, and minstrels were baptized, the Church continued to despise performers and for many of the same reasons: ecclesiastics condemned people they felt were dangerous and could not be controlled. Itinerancy also played an important role by the thirteenth century because minstrels did not always pay tithes, and did not always belong to a parish if they did not have a fixed domicile. And so minstrels lived outside the Church's reach. In

canons specifically referring to the status of minstrels, the Church responded by defining their trade as a depraved way of life.⁵⁹ Thus in the early councils it was not the definition of a trade in itself, but rather the additional stigma of an immoral life linked to that trade that the Church objected to and used to separate entertainers from the Christian community. And only the early Church councils actually excommunicated minstrels. Then to re-enter Christian society, minstrels were expected to pay the price of their livelihood. Even once the excommunication is omitted from the records, the penance exacted for admission to the sacraments is the same so that the Church still appears to be attempting to eliminate the occupation of performer altogether.

Admonitions to the Clergy

The Church's dismay at the behaviour of the clergy is reflected in the Lateran IV canons. They contain many such decrees dealing with guidelines for clergy. As the hierarchy shifted perspective to the clergy, it became less and less interested in the minstrels themselves. This shift in focus and the language of Lateran IV cannot be interpreted as increasing tolerance toward minstrels, however. In fact, most of the ecclesiastical record regulating the behaviour of clergy paints a much more opprobrious picture of minstrels both earlier and later than Lateran IV.⁶⁰ Schreier-Hornung has reasoned that if the Church was not able to control performers, then the hierarchy wanted at least to make sure their own priests and prelates behave with probity.⁶¹ But instead of changing attitudes toward minstrels, the canons, in an attempt to control priestly behaviour, continue using minstrels as a symbol of transgression. And so the image of minstrels remains the same.

The problem with stereotyping is that the writer need never explain the prejudices implied. When the ecclesiastical record justifies prohibitions against minstrelsy by categorizing it as an occupation that contributes to a dissolute way of life, it says little about what exactly performers do that is so seriously reprehensible. Just as the illustrator of the *Saxon Mirror* harboured preconceived notions about travelling performers, ecclesiastics also attributed blameworthy conduct to minstrels. Luckily the canons that prohibit the clergy from associating with performers or taking part in any performances contain a number of additional details—dance, song, music, scenic display—that shed a bit more light on the set of connotations that comprised the concept of performer. Regularly accompanying mention of these entertainments are the attributes: dissolute (*turpis*), dishonourable (*inhonestas*), useless (*inanis*), and illicit (*illicitas*). My interest in the decrees regulating clergy is to discover the

⁵⁹ Browe, p. 252.

⁶⁰ Schubert, p. 117.

⁶¹ Schreier-Hornung, p. 65.

underlying principles of moral Christian behaviour. Thus what we find behind these regulations are biases and a moral code that were transmitted to all monks and priests who were then in a position to disseminate them to the lay populace all over Europe.

The excerpts from the ecclesiastical record presented below chastize the representatives of the Church, the very men who are supposed to lead a pious, exemplary life before the rest of the faithful. It stands to reason that they all must adhere to stricter rules than the laity. Guidelines and warnings to clerics against illicit entertainments recur from the fourth century on. If minstrels are the symbol of illicit behaviour, then it makes sense that the Church attempted to set parameters on clerical behaviour by referring to minstrels and their performances. Of course, the Church had always tried to keep clergy from exposure to minstrel-type performances. Prohibitions and warnings to clergy abound from the earliest times right through the fourteenth century but to no avail. Members of the religious orders and other ecclesiastics continued to exhibit an unabated fondness for entertainments typically offered by minstrels thus giving performers work and remuneration. Consequently the excerpts from the record that we discuss below document best the Church's unrelenting censure of minstrels because it shows them posing a significant danger foremost to the clergy and by implication to the laity. A useful example from Germany proves that attitudes toward minstrels changed little from the fourth to the ninth century. The council of Aachen (816) decree repeats the injunction of the fourth century council of Laodicea that attendance at any kind of scenic or theatrical performance is improper for priests:

Quod non oporteat sacerdotes, aut clericos quibuscumque spectaculis in scenis, aut in nuptiis interesse; sed antequam thymelici ingrediantur, exurgere eos convenit, atque inde discedere.⁶²

[Furthermore, priests or clergy are not permitted to attend any kind of theatrical performance or wedding feasts. It is fitting for them to rise before the musicians (*thymelici*) arrive and to depart from there.]⁶³

The groups repeatedly mentioned are *histriones*, *mimi*, *joculatores* (here also *thymelici*). Without further characterization, these groups are reduced to categories that leave all the details up to the imagination. To some extent vague characterizations are in keeping with the indeterminate nature of minstrels. But what such general language also tells us is that the clergy needed no explanation for what

⁶² Concilium Aquisgranense, lib. I, 83, Mansi, vol. 14, col. 202.

⁶³ *Thymelicus* has been translated as 'actor' and 'musician' by various scholars. The vacillation between the two translations underscores the difficulty of pinpointing the activities of performers in medieval texts, for what we imagine occurring at a wedding feast depends heavily on how we construe these terms. See Jack D. A. Ogilvy, 'Mimi, Scurrae, Histriones: Entertainers of the Early Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 38 (1963), 603–19 (pp. 605, 610).

was wrong with entertainers. Rather they simply needed reminding of what was outside the limits of propriety and pious behaviour for a clergyman. Hence what we have here is already a stereotype as in Canon 16 of Lateran IV cited above and not even an intimation of performance practice or genre.

Writing at about the same time as the Aachen council, Alcuin, as a teacher, offers a bit more information as to just what considerations prompted the prohibitions. When he gives directives for proper conduct, he qualifies the licit, acceptable activity by contrasting it with minstrel performance:

Verba Dei legantur in sacerdotali convivio. Ibi decet lectorem audiri, non citharistam; sermones patrum, non carmina gentilium.⁶⁴

[The words of God are to be recited in a priestly gathering. There it is proper to listen to the reader, not the harp player, to the words of the fathers, not pagan songs.]

Alcuin does not even mention minstrels themselves. He merely states first the prescribed and then the prohibited content of what priests may listen to. Permissible material is sacred in content whereas non-permissible is pagan (i.e. vernacular). Alcuin hardly needs to mention the term 'minstrel' because playing the harp and singing vernacular songs are recognizable as performative activities. What the passage does not make clear is whether the clerics themselves might perform for each other, or whether this type of entertainment implies the hiring of a minstrel. But both possibilities are prohibited in any number of other council decisions. For Alcuin the issue of church music does not arise in this context. He finds it necessary to stress only content and thus to distinguish between hearing sermons and other sacred texts on the one hand, and narratives and songs on the other.

Some canons written between the ninth and twelfth century reveal that priests were led to trespasses not only, as one might expect, in public taverns and other iniquitous places, but they also enjoyed a variety of forbidden entertainments within the arena of a priestly *convivium*. Mention of such functions is repeated in Gratian (c. 1139) who collected the pronouncements of the Church Fathers and also a number of council decrees in his decretals.⁶⁵ The council of Nantes cited by Gratian is much more explicit about what priests do and even refers to the fact that these entertainments go on at a solemn, priestly affair. Prohibitions represented here are the lively activity of eating, drinking (possibly to the point of inebriation), and the forbidden entertainments typically occurring at any feast like telling inane stories, singing, performances with dancing bears, dancing women, and masked players who might impersonate animals or people or demons as the text suggests:

⁶⁴ *Alcuini Epistolae*, 124, MGH *Epistolae*, 4 (Zürich: Weidmann, 1960), p. 183.

⁶⁵ The council of Arles and many synodal canons found their way into Gratian's decretals (c. 1139) as did judgments of the Church Fathers. See Henshaw, p. 11, and Browe, p. 252.

Nullus presbiterorum, quando ad anniversarium diem, trigesimum, aut septimum, uel tertium alicuius defuncti, aut quacumque vocatione ad collectam presbiteri convenerit, se inebriare ullatenus presumat, nec precatus amore sanctorum uel ipsius animae bibere, aut alios ad bibendum cogere, uel se aliena precatione ingurgitare; nec plausus et risus inconditos, et fabulas inanes ibi referre aut cantare presumat, aut turpia ioca uel urso, uel tornatricibus ante se fieri patiatur; nec larvas demonum ante se fieri consentiat, quia hoc diabolicum est et a sacris canonibus prohibitum.⁶⁶

[No one among the priests should dare get drunk in any way when he attends a priestly gathering on the occasion of the commemoration of the thirtieth, the seventh or the third day of someone's death or at any other invitation. Neither should he make others drink by entreating them to drink for the love of saints or for the soul of that deceased person, nor should he fill himself [with wine] at someone else's invitation. He should not dare [exhibit] there disorderly applause or laughter, nor should he dare tell or sing useless fables. He should not allow indecent entertainments (*joca*) to be acted in his presence either with a bear or with women dancers, nor masks of demons be brought before him, for this is the work of the devil and is prohibited by the holy canons.]

It is not clear whether the priests hired performers for all the entertainments or whether they performed the music and singing themselves although both activities are punishable. For much of what is described, however, a professional performer is required. The dancing women and bear trainers are certainly professionals and their hire proves for certain that entertainers, even when officially denied sacraments, frequently found audiences among the clergy. Left unexplained in this description is the principle according to which the entertainments are judged. The negative values are disorder, excess, useless or untrue stories, indecency, and demonic evil. Where the border between moderation and excess, between order and disorder lies is left undefined. Nevertheless, churchmen are supposed to be able to make that judgment. What it describes for the reader is criteria of style. Thus to the first criterion for determining illicit behaviour, content, it is now possible to add style. Hence even if content is proper and pious, it should not be presented in an improper style.

While the official image of minstrels as debased, unrelenting sinners was being defined and perpetuated by Church records, the repeated prohibitions imply that minstrels were called upon more and more frequently to perform for clerical audiences. Clerics may even have sought out places where minstrels performed. An unnamed council in 1200 warns against taverns, and public places offering feasting, drinking and all types of entertainments, all of which are to be avoided by the clergy. The important information in this passage is the direct connection it makes between these public activities and *luxuria* and *superbia*:

⁶⁶ *Concilium Nanetense, Pars 1 distinctio XLIV, c. VII, Palea*, cited according to Gratian, *Decretum*, in *Corpus iuris canonici*, ed. by Emil Ludwig Richter and Emil Albert Friedberg, 2 vols (1879; Graz: Akademischer Druck, 1955), col. 158.

Inhibemus, ne sacerdotes vel quilibet clerici tabernas frequentent, vel publicis potationibus, aut spectaculis, aut ubi turpia & inhonesta cantantur intersint.[...] Et si in eisdem quibus intererunt convivii inhonesta vel turpia narrentur vel cantentur, si non possunt prohibere; saltem ita se gerant, ne videantur autem vel animum adhibere; & quia non solum luxuriam, set & superbiam quae omnium malorum radix est, & a qua omnis perditio sumsit initium, modis omnibus vitare debent & detestari, statuentes adjungimus ut ipsi sacerdotes & clerici quilibet habitum habeant suo ordini competentem.⁶⁷

[We forbid that priests or clerics of any kind should go to taverns or drinking parties or performances or that they should be present where shameful and dishonest things are sung.[...] And [should it happen] that at those gatherings where they are present such dishonest and shameful things should be told or sung, if they cannot prevent [this], let them at least behave in such a way that they should appear not to pay attention in any way. And, since they should avoid and abhor in every way not only extravagance but also pride (*superbia*), the root of all evil, we add to our statute that the said priests and clerics of any kind should maintain a demeanour befitting their order.]

The most popular adjectives for describing these entertainments, *turpia et inhonesta* are ceaselessly applied to singing, recitation of narratives, and general convivium to the point where these excerpts from the councils create a fixed formula. *Inhonesta* and *turpia* recur most frequently in phrases as *turpia joca* but one also finds *inanis*, *incondita* and *ignominia*. Stories are labelled inane and illicit; applause and laughter are disorderly, games and performances are depraved, the performers themselves are depraved and dishonourable, their activity or art is disgraceful. The adjective–noun combinations imply that negative adjectives may be replaced by positive ones. In other words, there are degrees of laughter, story, game or performance, and *risus*, *fabula* and *ioca* in themselves may well be legitimate until taken to excess. Certainly, theologians knew of modest and pious stories as well as shameless ones. But with repetition, the negative adjectives become fixed attributes of performative actions and content, at least in canons regulating clergy behaviour. Not relying on formulaic language alone, this passage spells out the causal link between entertainments and the most serious sins: *superbia* and *luxuria*. Passages like this one held in an uncertain location are numerous in the council and synodal decrees in Germany too.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ *Concilium incerti loci*, 1200, Caput IX; Mansi, vol. 22, col. 724.

⁶⁸ Enjoyment of and participation in secular entertainments is referred to repeatedly in several later councils and synods as undignified, morally base, and indecent, as in the warnings in the Synod of Bremen, 1292: *Item omnibus et singulis prelati ac clericis nostre dyoceseos et provincie prohibemus, ne in domibus suis vel comestionibus scolares vagos, qui goliardi vel histriones alio nomine appellantur, per quos non modicum vilescit dignitas clericalis, nullatenus recipiant [...]. Quod cum premissis statutis omnibus et singulis sub excommunicationis pena precipimus firmiter observare.* [We also prohibit all prelates and clergy in our diocese and province, every one of them and all that they may in any way

Clearly the Church failed to control the clergy. The association of the two groups, performers and clergy at any function, was certainly problematic and embarrassing for the Church. Of even greater concern to canonists were the churchmen who became intimate with minstrels to the point of taking up minstrelsy themselves. The ecclesiastical record states repeatedly that service to Christ and minstrelsy at the same time are incompatible and cannot be tolerated. Therefore, according to the Salzburg council of 1310, any cleric who has taken vows and also performs like a minstrel or goliard shall lose all clerical privileges:

Clerici qui clericali ordini non modicum detrahentes, se joculatores seu galiardos faciunt, aut buffones, si per annum artem illam ignominiosam exercuerint, ipso iure; si autem tempore breviori, & tertio admoniti non resipuerint, careant omni privilegio clericali.⁶⁹

[Clerics who, in no small measure undermine their clerical order, turn themselves into minstrels or wandering scholars or jesters (*buffones*), are to forfeit by very right, all their clerical privileges if they practice this disgraceful art for a year, or if they perform for a shorter time and do not desist after three reprimands.]

While minstrelsy is considered a disgraceful practice as such, when clerics perform, it is a sacrilege. What these priests were in fact doing we cannot know, especially since innuendo and exaggeration are not foreign to the Church records. More than likely this rule arose because the performer asked for remuneration. Account books also show that a number of clerics were considered performers and paid as such, including the ones calling themselves ‘Eberhardiner’.⁷⁰ Regardless of what the clergy were actually doing and where, the activities described in the Salzburg text reveal the degree to which the Church failed in its task of excluding levity from the serious business of exemplary conduct among churchmen. Yet even more importantly, this passage, like so many Church records, attests to the popularity of secular performances and thus to the importance of entertainers in daily life. It is possible that some of these canons also intended to prohibit clergy from performing in quasi-liturgical performances such as processions, see Chapter 3.

receive in their houses and at their banquets wayfaring scholars called *goliardi* or, by another name, minstrels (*histriones*), and through whom the clerical dignity is discredited in no small measure.[...] This we order by means of the aforementioned decrees to every and all of them to observe firmly under penalty of excommunication.]. From the *Hamburgisches Urkundenbuch* (Hamburg, 1842), vol. 1, p. 721, cited according to Mönckeberg, 34, note 2.

⁶⁹ *Concilium Saltzburgense* I, c III, Mansi, vol. 25, col. 227.

⁷⁰ Wolfger von Erla’s accounts during his trip to Italy show that he paid so-called *Lotterpaffen*, that is, performing clerics and a *Bischof der Eberhardiner* described as *mimus* under the rubric of entertainment. See Heger’s edition of Wolfger’s accounts where she discusses these entries, p. 132, note 129, and Knapp’s discussion of Wolfger’s court and support of these performers, ‘Der Hof des Kirchenfürsten Wolfger von Erla und die Literatur um 1200’, in *Wolfger von Erla*, ed. by Boshof, pp. 345–64 (pp. 352–53).

The only change in official Church attitude discernible thus far is that the sentence of excommunication was lifted from minstrels by the tenth century. It is difficult to determine how much of an amelioration this meant in their daily lives if they were still unable to receive communion. Based on the ecclesiastical record then, the overall attitude of the Church toward minstrel performance and secular songs did not change. After Lateran IV the Church turned its corrective admonition more towards the clergy. At the beginning of the thirteenth century the clergy seem to be even more involved in enjoying secular performances either as audience or performer because they are admonished more frequently than in the earlier records. The strategy of denigrating minstrels as a symbol of the illicit failed to produce the needed change in clerical behaviour. This is confirmed by the repetition of canons chastening the clergy right down through the fifteenth century. In sum, the language of the ecclesiastical record reveals two aspects of what is prohibited to clergy. The first is that clergy must keep themselves pure because of their proximity to holy space and liturgy. Since minstrels and their activities are stained by transgression, the worst thing clergy can do is copy minstrel behaviour and sully the sacred. Attributes like *ignominia*, *inhonesta*, and *turpia*, propagated as the typical traits of minstrels, could also infect those who associated with them. And second is the realization that secular stories and narratives are terribly attractive to all people including the clergy. My survey of authoritative ecclesiastical records illustrates the construction of the minstrel as transgressor. This image was used from the early Christian period on as a foil to illustrate by use of contrast proper Christian conduct. Anyone likened to a minstrel then is alleged to be guilty of illicit, unchristian conduct.

Thus far the results of this survey of territorial laws and ecclesiastical canons reveal that minstrels were stigmatized just as much for what they were said to do as they were for what they actually did. As a result of perceived deficiencies and immorality, performers from the early Middle Ages were typified as representing life on the margin of society regardless of what they themselves were or did. Authoritative texts are revealing because they are the texts in which society and its institutions define themselves. The self-definition is based on the genuine needs and practical capabilities of the secular and religious institutions to fulfil the task of ideological control over community and parish. These texts then established the norms according to which minstrels were judged. They then built the negative image of minstrel on the logical consequences of their yardstick. Minstrels were marginalized in part first because they were labelled early as morally corrupt. Secondly, they were stigmatized because the system had no means of controlling them. Viewed from within the social system, they were truly deficient. Since society normally patrols its border areas with much greater care than the safer centre, it is not surprising that both the official Church and lay community focussed a wary eye on the performers themselves—the men and women who stood on the boundary.

We may conclude that the pariah image, although primarily used as a symbol of turpitude and transgression, also has a certain basis in fact. The territorial laws could

not accommodate minstrels because of their itinerancy and the impaired legal status imposed by the concept of dishonourable trades. Performers as they travelled on circuits were unfamiliar to locals and virtually considered foreigners. Rarely was anyone able to vouch for their honesty or good character, and so the laws could not protect them. They did not always belong to a parish, were not seen attending Church regularly, and were known to frequent taverns and other public places of iniquity. In addition they provided entertainments, games and general mirth at public and private feasts, and when they led the carol and accompanied singers, they facilitated the (irreverent) mirth and dancing of ordinary people. Such minstrel activity is defined by the Church's moral code as lack of moderation and discipline, which leads to irreverence for the sacraments and sinfulness. And that makes minstrels transgressors by definition. The conditions that define transgression arose from objective criteria established by medieval society in an effort to maintain order. Unfortunately, since performers were first considered morally disreputable by the Church Fathers, it was easy to continue to project additional disgraceful traits onto them. Thus entertainers were considered vulgar, unreliable, untrustworthy, and debauched rabble. Their haunts were public taverns but also private homes where they escaped the vigilant eye of authorities. They were thought to lie, cheat at dice, flatter, seduce women, tell scurrilous, deceitful tales, sing songs of lust and debauchery, and with their performances, entice the faithful away from the solemnity of the sacraments to perform all types of disgraceful games and dances. In effect, performers were believed to deal in all kinds of excesses that corrupt good Christians.

The pariah status of performers can now be refined. Their marginality was based only in part on a definition or construction created by the Church Fathers. It evolved as Church and medieval society defined itself. In the process of defining and organizing beliefs and customs, the ruling group with the self-proclaimed *recta ratio* came to divorce itself from the symbol that indicated the edge not the centre. And in this process, the ruling group then came to dissociate itself from the many traits and practices that actually promoted the creative activity of performers. The suggestion in the beginning of this chapter has proven correct: official texts are indeed unable to characterize minstrels explicitly. Instead, they create and perpetuate an image far removed from the real individuals they are supposedly regulating.

Individual Authoritative Voices

As the ecclesiastical record has demonstrated, both the highly valued sombre piety that avoided entertainment on the one hand, and the disvalued secular entertainment of song, music and dance on the other were cathected, causing conflict. This means that the prohibition of employing entertainers was honoured as much in the breach as in the observance. The conflict this caused between ideal Christian conduct and actual behaviour needed a resolution. Schreier-Hornung suggests that an amelio-

ration of the severe language in ecclesiastical records during the late twelfth century is consistent with a shift in official position from concern about minstrels, whom the authorities have learned they cannot curb, to concern with behaviour of clergy, over whom they must maintain control.⁷¹ By the thirteenth century the Church appears to be capitulating specifically in its battle to control the clergy. So many clergy, especially prelates, enjoyed minstrel performances or even retained their own personal minstrels that it became necessary to resolve the discrepancy between rules and actual daily life.

The growing, obvious contradiction between the ideal standard in the regulations and actual practice among the clergy must have become terribly embarrassing. Just how notorious the illicit conduct of the clergy was can be seen from letters supposedly written by the devil thanking ecclesiastics for their support, which included greed, drunkenness, *luxuria*, worldly ambition, and lack of interest in their priestly duties.⁷² Over the centuries a great many outspoken prelates found unceasing satisfaction castigating the immorality and irresponsibility of their fellow clergy. As a point of departure it is valuable to look at an example of just how acrid one person's criticism of his bishop could be.

One of the most vituperative condemnations was written in a letter (c. 1061) by Meinhard, headmaster of the cathedral school of Bamberg regarding his bishop, Gunther (1057–65). Meinhard's remarks reveal how deep and divisive the chasm was between the lovers of music and song, and the strict moralists. To his mind, Gunther's delight in heroic songs had become a veritable scourge. In previous letters, he had chastised Gunther directly for indulging unrepentantly in the pleasures of secular (heroic) songs while residing on his family estate in Austria. Now, with Gunther again attending to secular (and courtly) matters in Austria, he cannot resist a venomous query as he writes to a third party:

Quid vero agit domnus noster? quid suus ille exercitus galeatorum leporum? que bella, quas acies tractant? quos triumphos celebrant? Dii boni, quanta ibi colluvio non virorum, sed muscarum! quam magnifici et vani strepitus! Nulla ibi gravitas, nulla disciplina. Et o miseram et miserandam episcopi vitam, o mores! Numquam ille Augustinum, numquam ille Gregorium recolit, semper ille Attalam, semper Amalungum et cetera id genus portare tractat. Versat ille non libros, sed lanceas, miratur ille non litterarum apices, sed mucronum acies.⁷³

⁷¹ Schreier-Hornung, p. 71.

⁷² Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 88–90.

⁷³ Meinhard von Bamberg, cited according to *Briefsammlung der Zeit Heinrichs IV*, ed. by Carl Erdmann, MGH, *Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit*, 4 (Weimar: Böhlau, 1950), Part II, *Briefe Meinhard von Bamberg*, letter no. 73, pp. 120–21. Carl Erdmann also reads this passage as directly referring to Gunther's interest in minstrel performances, 'Fabulae Curiales', *ZfdA*, 73 (1936) p. 91. Erdmann also indicates a problem with the text and suggests

[How is our master? How is that army of helmeted hares of his? And what wars, what battle lines are they fighting? What triumphs are they celebrating? Good God, what an accumulation, horde, not of men but of flies! How pompous and vain the din! No gravity, no discipline. Oh, what a poor and pitiable life of a bishop, oh mores! Never has he contemplated Augustine, or Gregory, rather, he always ponders Attila, Amalung [Dietrich of Bern] and other things of that genre. He deals not with books but with lances, admires not the heights of [Latin] literature but the sharp points of swords.]

As Meinhard vents his spleen, we discover his personal opinion regarding his bishop's lack of probity that consists of an excessive interest in secular affairs. Later in the letter he complains that Gunther has abandoned his duties in Bamberg. In this passage, Meinhard catalogues battles, swords and lances, and epic songs of great heroic deeds (Attila, Dietrich) as signs of his secular commitments. Carl Erdmann considers the hares to refer to the troupe of players Gunther would surround himself with. However, a rabbit is a most unlikely image for a warrior or an entertainer unless Meinhard was hinting at cowardice. At a later date, a popular epic, *König Rother* (c. 1160–70), contains a demeaning scene in which fainthearted minstrels flee from the battlefield and are the sole survivors to tell of the carnage. However, the martial imagery in this letter may well have been chosen to mock all of Gunther's secular preoccupations, including listening to heroic songs. But whatever Meinhard's originally intended meaning might have been, he declares that Bishop Gunther lives a contrary and pitiable existence without order or seriousness, and that listening to heroic songs contributes to this life. Bishop Gunther's disgraceful behaviour is clear: he is attending to rabbits and heroic songs instead of shepherding his flock. Clearly, the world has turned upside down, and Gunther has become a pure mockery of a bishop.

Although such forcefully caustic and relentless derision aimed at prelates who engage minstrels is rare, ardent cautioners and moralists such as John of Salisbury, Honorius Augustodunensis, Peter the Chanter, Thomas of Chobham, and Thomas Aquinas were plentiful, and all were equally wary of contact with performers. They are some of the select voices to whom most scholars had been giving primary attention but there are also others like Adam of Bremen. What stand did these churchmen take on this issue as compared with the official record? Instead of merely digging in their heels, several took on the project of defining the function and permissible types of entertainments and performance. The writings of just a few individuals (Adam of Bremen, Thomas of Chobham, Thomas Aquinas) are worth re-examining even though many scholars have dealt extensively with many of them⁷⁴.

portare tractat may read *poeta retractat*. I have omitted the *portare* in my translation in order to render a parallel construction, *Briefe*, p. 121.

⁷⁴ Schubert, pp. 117–18.

First of all, their writings flesh out the single-minded canonical rules examined above with their individual opinions. When their comments and arguments are measured against the ecclesiastical record, the discussants turn out to be quite conservative. Since the fundamental criticism of minstrels was that they played no *necessary* role in society, these writers discussed the function of entertainments in order to make allowances for some types of performances and to classify licit and illicit performers. Despite their guarded attempts at leniency towards performers, I submit that the definitions and classification are inadequate and had little practical impact on minstrels.

Secondly, the discussion surrounding the function of entertainment reveals how entrenched the symbolic concept of minstrel was by the twelfth century, and how tightly folkloric and popular beliefs and motifs had attached themselves to it. As long as the symbol of the minstrel as outsider and transgressor continues to be available for polemic use and becomes entrenched, its potency grows. Almost no writer was free of the given pattern of attitudes and beliefs when composing arguments for what is licit and illicit in a Christian community. Quite the contrary, they espoused the stereotypes, consciously built on them, and, ultimately, did not successfully redefine them. The church record helps to place in perspective precisely those authors who have been understood by scholars to give more lenient opinions when writing about minstrels and their activities. We shall see that although the German documents as well as the authoritative penitentials were in the process of searching for a way to reconcile the rules of the Church with the realities of daily life, they made little headway. General condemnations were repeated and the contradictions grew. The Church continued to delimit the range of appropriate, licit activity by means of the minstrel image as an anti-type.

The third reason for looking at these writings on the function of entertainment is to re-examine the scholarly opinion. These writings have been interpreted by historians as a sign that minstrels were gradually gaining acceptance in official society. If indeed the attendance at secular performances was increasing, churchmen were faced with a difficult problem. They needed to devise morally acceptable ways to allow people to take part in entertainments. Several members of the clergy attempted to formulate a solution by dividing entertainments into acceptable and unacceptable types. One of these churchmen, Adam of Bremen, had the task of recounting in the best possible light the life of his archbishop and the performers he enjoyed. Another, Thomas of Chobham, was involved with the re-thinking and rewriting of penitentials, and Thomas Aquinas was the first to pull all the arguments together that, in theory at least, gave minstrels a place in thirteenth century society. I wish to argue that many theologians wrote with an eye toward making some allowances for entertainers, to give them some measure of legitimacy, and so to alleviate partly the discrepancy between ecclesiastical rules and quotidian behaviour, by providing the clergy with guidelines. With these guidelines priests could then guide their parishioners' choice of entertainments. Even if scholars are correct about the intention of these theologians to liberalize attitudes, their work only reinforced

many of the accumulated beliefs and prejudices of canonists and the general populace alike. My thesis is that these writers primarily reproduced the stereotypes. Their definitions remained too general and, therefore, did not facilitate the ability of professional entertainers to attract audiences and make a living.

At the same time Meinhard was railing against Bishop Gunther's secular practices, his contemporary, Adam of Bremen, was writing in a liberal and matter of fact tone his history and biography of Adalbert Archbishop of Bremen (c. 1076). Adam demonstrates that it was not only common practice for prelates' courts as well as monastic houses to invite minstrels to perform, but that the practice could be presented as an acceptable custom as early as the second half of the eleventh century, far earlier than Schreier-Hornung and Page are aware of.

Adam of Bremen constructed his biography of the Archbishop of Bremen with great care and attention to detail.⁷⁵ It is an exceptionally sensitive biography, attempting to paint a picture of both the virtues and failings of his mentor while refraining from flattery, one of the traits clergy take particular exception to in minstrels. His strategy is to provide a narrative that enables the reader to understand how the fortunes of a man so gifted with virtues and talents could deteriorate so severely. Adam was sympathetic to the problems his archbishop faced and presented his strengths as the cause of his downfall. To this end, he describes events and personalities, paying attention to both good and bad decisions. The turning point comes in Chapter 36 where the theme of pride first appears as a negative trait. After that point, Adalbert's mistakes increase and his political fortunes begin to decline. It is in this second half of the biography that Adam mentions his munificence, lavish hospitality, and the type of entertainment he enjoyed.

Adam of Bremen's description of Adalbert's elegant treatment of guests is a significant example of the degree of acceptance some minstrels enjoyed at court. Adam was tolerant of the kind of entertainments and amusements at Adalbert's court although he viewed them with a cleric's accustomed wariness. Still, his description and evaluation of the fables, histories, and music is mostly positive, and Adalbert's pleasures and entertainments are placed in a generally favourable light:

Recumbens autem non tam cibis aut poculis quam faceciis oblectabatur aut regum hystoriis aut raris philosophorum sencenciis. Si vero erat privatus, quod raro accidit, ut solus et absque hospitibus maneret vel regiis legatis, tunc fabulis aut somniis, semper autem sobriis ocium terebat loquelis. Raro fidicines admittebat, quos tamen propter alleviandas anxietatum curas aliquando censuit esse necessarios. Ceterum panto-

⁷⁵ See C. Stephen Jaeger's perceptive discussion of the exceptional merit of Adam of Bremen's biography within the context of medieval bishops' lives, *The Origins of Courtliness—Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals—939–1210* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), Chapter 4.

mimos, qui obscenis corporum motibus oblectare vulgus solent, a suo conspectu prorsus eiecit.⁷⁶

[While dining, he took pleasure not so much in the food and drink as in courtly witticisms or the histories of kings, or the rare maxims of philosophers. But if he was alone and without guests or royal ambassadors, which rarely happened, then he would pass his leisure time with stories or fantasy tales [imagination], always however, with moderate language. On rare occasions he admitted lute players for the purpose of lessening anxiety and worries which he deemed necessary. However, entertainers (*antomimos*) who made a habit of contorting their body with obscene gestures to amuse the common people he drove out of his sight.]

Adam of Bremen's text reveals a search for new arguments that make allowances for minstrels at the archbishop's court. It is easy to discern the pains Adam takes in order to remain within the bounds of acceptable Christian norms. He expands just a bit, giving Adalbert slightly more leeway and in the process, extends the bounds of Christian morality and norms. Yet it is important to note that the archbishop is not alone in his entertainments, and Adam as writer is not unique in his tolerance. Adam's text indicates how careful some had to be in their attempts to make allowances for minstrels. First he had to consider and maintain the image of the archdiocese, next the reputation of Adalbert, and thirdly, the continuing success of the heathen mission. None of these are served if Adalbert or the archdiocese is dishonoured.

The arguments develop in several directions as discussion among theologians progresses. Adam's argument is that some things are permitted in moderation. Here it is important to note how he qualifies the type of performances enjoyed in order to separate the concept of excess (as non-Christian) from the symbol of minstrelsy. This is an extremely useful move because by building on moderation instead, he fashions it into the primary criterion that gives legitimacy to some forms of entertainment, leaving those who indulge in excess outside the bounds of decency.

Another strategy is to subvert the symbol by claiming first one, then more and more exceptions to the rule. (Chobham makes use of this argument.) This results in many claims, especially in penitentials that 'some' minstrels do no evil when they act in a modest and moderate fashion. The claim is that not all individuals fit into the class. Those who fit the criteria of deficiency or excess are the base entertainers not to be listened to; others belong to a different category and are permitted. This allows for three ways of distinguishing among minstrel activities:

⁷⁶ Adam of Bremen, *Hamburgische Kirchengeschichte*, ed. by Bernhard Schmeidler, MGH, *Scriptores rerum germanicarum in usum scholarum*, 2 (Hannover: Hahnische Buchhandlung, 1917), pp. 182–83. The translation is mine, but see also Francis J. Tschan's translation that makes Adam sound far more critical and vituperative than I read him in Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 147.

Function is the most important category for it gives them a place in society. As long as minstrels symbolize the outsider, they have no function in society. But as soon as they are credited with a function, they are assigned a place, however meagre and insecure. The second criterion is moderation and in terms of kinesics applies to questions of technique and style but it is also related to proportion and harmony. The third criterion is content; it is the edifying and uplifting material that enables performers to fulfil their function. The purpose of these three concepts is to set boundaries. Style and content and function are interdependent. Together they establish a means to evaluate theatrical events and the artists who produce them.

For arguments offering distinctions in content, the interdependence of the three categories is determining. If the function of the performer is to educate, then the material for the performance script must be morally inspiring and instructive. Theologians, entrenched in the literate mode, tend to express their requirement and desire for moral Christian content in terms of textual content. In theory, however, if the performer offers edifying material in a style that meets the needs of proportion and moderation, then the performance is acceptable.

Adam of Bremen explains that Adalbert employed minstrels for the purpose of entertaining him during his leisure hours and relieving him of anxiety—both legitimate needs. Then he proceeds to explain the content and aesthetic style to which this entertainment was limited. Decorum and moderation, we are assured, were always maintained as no acrobats or dancers, or anything that reflected the tastes of the masses was tolerated. The stories, although they were fabricated and not factual, were always told with sober, moderate language. Vulgar or obscene language (style) or topics (content) were avoided.

Adam's text proves that a variety of attitudes has always existed. His argument also demonstrates the repeated attempts to expand the range of allowable conduct. Adam did not paint entertainment in neutral terms out of any concern or interest for minstrels, but chose his strategy in order to put his archbishop in the best possible light while remaining truthful about his deeds and words. The genre of biography gave Adam relative freedom to describe in almost any terms he saw fit a scenario in which minstrels entertain within the bounds of propriety. This is not so with penitentials for they must strictly represent doctrine. As prescriptive texts, they are closely allied with synodal canons and decretals. Penitentials are not directly concerned with entertainers, for they do not ask minstrels what sins they have committed. Those confessing are not the minstrels, but rather, the laity who employed or listened to a performer. Penitentials are, after all, concerned with Christian behaviour and to that extent they address popular beliefs and activities, including the popularity of entertainers. Their goal is to lead the errant soul back to the fold. Thus their references to minstrels again indicate a concern for pinpointing questionable activities among the parishioners and redefining the border between proper and improper conduct. Penitentials are practical guidelines intended for those who comprise the entertainer's audience.

Penitentials are not normally thought of as expressing liberal thought. In the twelfth century many moral theologians and reformers like Peter Chanter and a bit later, Thomas of Chobham, Robert Doking, and others were re-evaluating and rewriting the old ninth- and tenth-century penitentials.⁷⁷ While their goal was to lay down unambiguous rules of conduct, they were introducing greater flexibility into the system. This led them also to argue for the acceptability of some minstrels, but with several qualifications. Christopher Page argues forcefully that these writers emancipated the minstrel with their classification that designated certain singer-musicians, specifically string players, as acceptable.⁷⁸ Page attempts to demonstrate that instrumentalists became legitimate as a result of these writers in the thirteenth century in England and France, and that this growing leniency is discernable because various viewpoints among moral theologians begin to proliferate.⁷⁹ To be sure, in their re-evaluation of guidelines for confessors, these moralists began finding excuses to distinguish between different types of minstrels and to legitimate the audience members who listened to some of them. But to claim that these writers ‘emancipated’ musicians is far too strong.

Now it is true that these moral theologians in the twelfth and thirteenth century wrote new penitentials based on their re-evaluation of general guidelines for behaviour of laity and clergy, and that their own writings reflected some innovations. It is also true that they even addressed the propriety of various types of entertainments, as well as the intentions of performers. But Page also finds a good deal of prevarication in these texts⁸⁰. As is to be expected, these moral theologians had no clear definition for minstrelsy because they relied on the canons and the traditional image of performers. Hence they found it difficult to argue cogently for allowing certain performers and yet disallowing others. Page stresses one innovation that had great significance for defining the function of minstrels, and that is the concept of intentionality.⁸¹ Twelfth-century scholasticism and Abelard’s notion of intentionality provided a new argument for rehabilitating minstrels. The intentions of a deed could now be separated from the deed itself so that one could claim that minstrels intend to benefit others and should be allowed. Of course, not all theologians were eager to subscribe to this, but it gave theologians a reason to temper some of the moral stigma attached to entertainers.⁸² Ultimately, however, they did not change the official attitude of the canons towards performers.

Like Adam, Thomas of Chobham (c. 1216) took a practical but much less emotional approach and proceeded to classify licit and illicit performers based on the

⁷⁷ Baldwin, pp. 200–02.

⁷⁸ Page, *Owl*, p. 17, p. 28.

⁷⁹ Page, *Owl*, p. 9, p. 11.

⁸⁰ Page, *Owl*, p. 19.

⁸¹ Page, *Owl*, pp. 27–28.

⁸² Page, *Owl*, p. 29.

facts as he perceived them.⁸³ His schema is a genuine attempt to be more precise and to evaluate entertainers more realistically than his predecessors. And so he creates three classes of entertainers using the following terms: acrobats (possibly mimes and dancers), minstrels (*histriones*), wandering jesters or possibly parasites (*scurre vagi*) who, he declares, have no function (*ad nihil aliud utilis sunt*); and two kinds of minstrels (*joculatores*)—legitimate and illegitimate—who are distinguished by the content and style of their performances:

Sed notandum quod histrionum tria sunt genera. Quidam enim transformant et transfigurant corpora sua per turpes saltus vel per turpes gestus, vel denudando corpora turpiter, vel induendo horribiles loricas vel larvas, et omnes tales damnabiles sunt nisi relinquunt officia sua.

Sunt etiam alii histriones qui nihil operantur sed curiose agunt, non habentes certum domicilium, sed circueunt curias magnatum et loquuntur obprobria et ignominias de absentibus. Tales etiam damnabiles sunt, quia prohibet Apostolus cum talibus cibum sumere. Et dicuntur tales *scurre vagi*, quia ad nihil aliud utilis sunt nisi ad devorandum et maledicendum.

Est etiam tertium genus histrionum qui habent instrumenta musica ad delectandum homines, sed talium duo sunt genera. Quidam enim frequentant publicas potationes et lascivas congregationes ut cantent ibi lascivas cantilenas, ut moveant homines ad lasciviam, et tales sunt damnabiles sicut et alii. Sunt autem alii qui dicuntur ioculatores qui cantant gesta principum et vitas sanctorum et faciunt solatia hominibus vel in egritudinibus suis vel in angustiis suis et non faciunt nimias turpitudines sicut faciunt saltatores et saltatrices et alii qui ludunt in imaginibus inhonestis et faciunt videri quasi quedam phantasmata per incantationes vel alio modo. Si autem non faciunt talia sed cantant instrumentis suis gesta principum et alia utilia ut faciant solatia hominibus sicut dictum est, bene possunt sustineri tales, sicut ait Alexander papa.⁸⁴

[But it should be noted that there are three kinds of minstrels (*histrionum*). Some transform and transfigure their own bodies by base contortions and base gesticulations, or by shamefully stripping themselves naked, or by wearing horrible breastplates or masks, and all such people are to be damned unless they abandon their trade.

There are yet other minstrels, who perform no useful activity, but snoop around having no fixed abode, but circulate at the courts of great men and backbite the absent with shameless and degrading remarks. Such men are also to be damned, for the Apostle

⁸³ Many scholars have discussed Chobham already but none have anything new to add. See Faral, pp. 67–69, Page, pp. 21–31, Baldwin, pp. 199–203, E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1903), and most recently, Hartung, *Fahrende*, pp. 133–36.

⁸⁴ Thomas of Chobham, *Summa confessorum*, ed. by F. Broomfield (Louvain: Editions Nauwelaerts, 1968), 291–93.

bids us take no food with such men as these. And such men are called itinerant jesters (*scurre vagi*) for they are good for nothing but gluttony and calumny.

There is also a third type of minstrel who has musical instruments for people's entertainment and is of two kinds: some frequent public drinking places and wanton gatherings, where they sing lascivious songs to move people to lust; and they are to be damned like the rest. But there are others called entertainers (*joculatores*), who sing the deeds of princes and the lives of saints, and comfort people in illness or in distress, and do not commit those innumerable shameful acts which are done by male and female dancers and others who perform in indecent costumes (*imaginibus*) and almost conjure up certain apparitions by means of enchantment or in some other way. If they do not do such things, but sing with their instruments of the deeds of princes and other such profitable things, in order to comfort people, as mentioned, then these entertainers may be tolerated, as was stated by Pope Alexander.]

At first glance, this evaluation of minstrels appears matter of fact. First of all, he accepts minstrelsy as a legitimate trade citing an anecdote in which Pope Alexander assured a minstrel that he could legitimately pursue his trade. At the same time however, Chobham himself disallows any support to performers and calls such payments a sin. As is the case with all penitentials, the focus on a practical definition is intended as a useful guide for priests who need to accommodate parishioners who attend entertainments.⁸⁵

Chobham diverges from his predecessors notably in that he detaches from some minstrels the demonic power normally associated with them in popular thought. This is significant because his rational and pragmatic approach to the subject permits him to divide the minstrel class into subsets and to treat one small subset as normal people exercising their trade and without any particular stigma. Interestingly, his term for both subsets is *joculatores*. The latter subset is described as poet-musicians who sing heroic songs and other edifying pieces. With this approach he actually subverts the common association of minstrel with the incarnation of evil that has made minstrels a power to be feared. Yet at the same time, he believes in demons, devils and magicians. He even attributes to some minstrels and magicians the power of illusion and enchantment. Supposedly, by means of their art and performances, they can make people see visions and *phantasmata*.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Page points out Chobham's own system of terms for his classification: *histrion* is the generic designation and *joculator* is the singer-musician, *Owl*, p. 23. He goes on to show that Thomas Dockett follows Chobham's ideas closely, but does not follow his terminology, pp. 24–25.

⁸⁶ Perhaps references to apparitions and masks are Chobham's way of describing the emotional experience of a successful performance. He would then be giving us yet another perspective on the impact of performance on an audience. The effect appears to be two-fold, both emotional and cognitive at once. Both are experienced together: the emotional experience on the one hand and on the other, the simultaneous recognition that a staged or pretended event is being perceived. The phantasms or visions (or even insights!) appear real enough to

The argument follows essentially the same line as Adam of Bremen. Most importantly, Thomas of Chobham has at his disposal Adam's three relatively objective criteria of function, content, and style with which to evaluate entertainers and set up his hierarchy. The purpose of entertainment—comfort and edification—does not change. Solace also extends, as Thomas mentions, to helping those in both physical and emotional distress and pain.⁸⁷ The type of content permitted includes profitable or instructive topics that may imply true stories but certainly includes mirrors of princes and chansons de geste (and possibly romances) in addition to saints' lives. When Thomas writes of the lewd, or exaggerated movements of acrobats, dancers, and mimes, he is talking about style and does not restrict himself to any particular performance genre. He is distressed about the manner in which all types of performance are staged or presented visually. His choice of pejorative terms alone denounces all movement and gesture in performance as excessive and entirely improper. If we imagine what Thomas would approve, it would most likely be a restrained, 'modest' style that produced a sedate and controlled rendition of melody, and song, but it is questionable whether he would accept any form of dance. As we shall see in Chapter 3, this ideal of restraint and moderation also makes its way into secular court culture and can be used today to determine where medieval churchmen placed the limits of licit behaviour in performers.

Thomas of Chobham's triadic hierarchy thus requires that all minstrel activities be evaluated according to content, style and purpose. The categories give the appearance of having been arrived at via an objective method. These definitions were intended to be a practical guide, but are they actually progressive as Edmond Faral thought?⁸⁸ In the first two species of *histriones*, Thomas lists in quick succession as many of their numerous sins as he can. These excesses include deception, sloth, gluttony, exhibitionism, vanity, wantonness, vagrancy, and lascivious songs, and incitement to sin. On the whole, the list contains nothing that has not already been previously expressed by others. He applies the key principle of moderation—a fundamental measure of propriety and virtue—but his tone and language belie his goals. His statement, laden with emotionally charged defamations and a lengthy enumeration of vices actually transforms his classification into an excuse to denounce entertainers. Thus his analysis is not an attempt to come to terms with minstrel popularity and the human need for entertainment. When he finally

be reflected upon, but are feigned or created by means of performance. The fear that an audience may mistake the appearance for the real is a constant theme in literary texts. The dichotomy of appearance and reality is essential for a successful scenic performance, see Schechner, *Between*, 118.

⁸⁷ As early as the thirteenth century, German medical texts prescribe the services of minstrels who play music and song to aid in recovery from illness or bloodletting. See G. Eis, 'Spielmann und Buch als Helfer in schweren Stunden', in Gerhard Eis, *Vom Werden altd deutscher Dichtung. Literar-historische Proportionen* (Berlin: Schmidt, 1962), p. 80.

⁸⁸ Faral, p. 69.

mentions acceptable performers, the singer-instrumentalist (*joculator*) makes only a brief appearance as a minor exception to the class. And Thomas makes clear that he is acceptable only if he refrains from lewd gestures and other excesses of the body. In the final analysis, this penitential writer builds his classification system on the prejudicial premise that ‘not all minstrels are evil and dissolute’. Such a statement, unfortunately, reinforces the entrenched symbolism of the authoritative code found again and again in moralists’ writings. Even though Thomas tempers the prohibitions of the strictest writers like Meinhard and offers what appears to be a practical compromise, he is not truly lenient or sympathetic towards performers. In my view he did not alter the entrenched prejudicial image in any way nor ameliorate the conditions under which entertainers found work.

Nevertheless, Thomas of Chobham’s efforts had a significant impact among his contemporaries on a practical level. To penitent and confessor he offered new manoeuvrability within the system and supplied the tools needed to define any performance as licit on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, even though he presented a classification that was impossible to apply consistently and would not raise the minstrel’s status, he provided useful loopholes.

Turning now to Thomas Aquinas we find a new tone of tolerance that finally allows *histriones* to be discussed in neutral terms without opprobrium. Thomas is the first to claim that they are good men and women by asserting that God views performers as worthy human beings. In his statement on minstrelsy, Thomas built on the image perpetuated by previous writers but was not bound to them the way Thomas of Chobham was. He pressed the old, familiar arguments farther to legitimate the person and occupation of minstrel in the Christian community. First he stated that, like other people, they pursue some virtuous activities such as praying, almsgiving, and they also moderate their own emotions and actions. Moving one step beyond Peter the Chanter’s admission that one may give gifts or alms to minstrels because they are human beings, Thomas stated that compensation or reward for work is, therefore, appropriate, but again in moderation. Next he explicitly affirmed the human need for recreation and entertainment arguing that the experience of beauty in proper proportion and harmony is salutary to the contemplation of God. In agreement with the canons he admitted that entertainment does not serve a useful or necessary purpose; nevertheless it offers relief and comfort from the anxiety and toil of life. On that basis then, he accepted the minstrel or performer as a legitimate occupation (*officia licita*) as long as he maintained moderation. Entertainment is levity: it lacks gravity and is juxtaposed to the drudgery that is life and truth. Since levity is necessary for human life, he explained, those who attend to these needs (*histriones*) perform lawful occupations and are not in a state of sin:

Ad tertium dicendum quod, sicut dictum est, ludus est necessarius ad conversationem humanae vitae. Ad omnia autem quae sunt utilia conversationi humanae deputari possunt aliqua officia licita. Et ideo etiam officium histrionum, quod ordinatur ad

solatium hominibus exhibendum, non est secundum se illicitum: nec sunt in statu peccati, dummodo moderate ludo utantur, idest non utendo aliquibus illicitis verbis, vel factis ad ludum, et non adhibendo ludum negotiis et temporibus indebitis. Et quamvis in rebus humanis non utantur alio officio per comparisonem ad alios homines, tamen per comparisonem ad seipsos et ad Deum alias habent seriosas et virtuosas operationes; puta dum orant et suas passiones et operationes componunt, et quandoque etiam pauperibus eleemosynas largiuntur. Unde illi qui moderate eis subveniunt, non peccant, sed juste faciunt, mercedem ministerii eorum eis retribuendo. Si qui autem superflue sua in tales consumunt, vel etiam sustenant illos histriones qui illicitis ludis utuntur, peccant, quasi eos in peccato foventes. (*Summa theologiae*, II. 2, Quaest. 168, Art.3.).⁸⁹

[Thirdly it has to be said that performance (*ludus*), as already mentioned, is a necessary thing for the conduct of human life. Now to all the things deemed necessary for human life some legitimate trades can be assigned. Accordingly, even the minstrel's trade, which is intended to provide comfort to humans, is not illegitimate in itself. Nor are they [minstrels] in a state of sin as long as they execute their performances with moderation, that is, by using no unlawful words or acts in their performance, and by not performing during activities and times when performance is improper. And even if with respect to other people they have no other occupation as far as human affairs are concerned, with respect to God and themselves they do perform other serious and virtuous activities: take, for instance, the fact that they pray and control their own emotions and actions (*operationes*), and sometimes even give alms to the poor. Therefore, those people who support them in moderation commit no sin, but act justly when rewarding them for their services. However, if some needlessly waste their fortunes on such people or even support those minstrels who participate in illegitimate performances, they do sin, since they encourage them [such minstrels] in their sinning.]

As this excerpt makes clear, performances must nevertheless be treated with caution. Thomas expressed caveats regarding the four constituents of performance. First, with regard to the function of performance, he was in essence opposed to anything that would destroy proportion. He warned, like many others, that too intense an aesthetic experience would cause one to lose oneself in vain contemplation. His second point is that time and place were also critical. Play and levity may not intrude on serious activities or occasions such as religious feasts. Third, performance must shun indecent content, i.e. language and action. Fourth, performance style, which Aquinas calls theatricality, may not be too vigorous and forceful. As long as a performance is temperate and well-proportioned (shunning indecent language and actions) it is beneficial but anything done in a theatrical manner (*more theatro*) (implies excessive movement) diverts the soul from God.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Cited according to St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Gilby (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), vol. 44, pp. 222–25. Translation is mine.

⁹⁰ Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. by Hugh Bredin (Cambridge,

Aquinas says this of music but it applies to all modes of performance. Thus we see that Aquinas is less rigid than his predecessors, but still shares with the Church Fathers a distrust of the pernicious influence of performance on the spectator or listener.

Aquinas handles performance and its moral and aesthetic implications only in the abstract so that his discussion is not directly applicable to the production of minstrel entertainments. He remains abstract because minstrelsy is not his primary focus. Rather, he is talking about how lay people live their lives.⁹¹ Entertainment with its levity is thus kept in the margins of social activity because it is contrasted to truth that requires seriousness. It is still easy to exclude minstrels because Aquinas's entire discussion is so general as to allow the particulars to be interpreted freely. As a result, he leaves the four components of performance unqualified, the practical questions unexplored, and provides even less of a guide or hierarchy than Chobham does. Moderation in all aspects including time and place of play is reasserted as the principal value. Hence as for innovations, Aquinas did not break down the stereotypes that kept minstrels on the margin. The symbol and the stigma persisted. In the next chapter I pursue the thesis that the concept of moderation is fundamentally at odds with what minstrels do, so that no argument was available to any of these writers to compose a serviceable set of standards for performance practice.

Thus far we have seen three authoritative writers present a few arguments tolerant of certain types of entertainment. Unfortunately, the arguments are too general to establish any discrete genre of minstrelsy as a legitimate occupation. They made allowances on the basis of the ethical--aesthetic concept of moderation, but it was difficult to apply: none of our writers resolved the precise demarcation between excess and moderation. Minstrels thus remained synonymous with excess. The symbol of transgression prevailed. The accompanying low social and legal status also endured, and censure of minstrelsy continued. While Aquinas did not re-define minstrels, he certainly raised the threshold of tolerance for entertainment in official discourse. Thus his contribution was to extend the range of socially accepted norms and morality to include all performers who contribute to the human need for levity and entertainment. Nevertheless, as far as I can ascertain, his tolerant stance did little to increase employment opportunities for minstrels

The contribution of these moralists was a new, more practical strategy for dealing with the faithful who attended entertainments. The writers assigned social functions to performers and offered what appeared at first to be guidelines for permissible style and content. How any of these arguments applied to actual performers remains vague at best. Judging from the excerpts cited from the eleventh century, the discussion about entertainment and the revision of the penitentials was necessary and long

MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 134.

⁹¹ Schubert, p. 117.

overdue. What Adam of Bremen and Meinhard of Bamberg's accounts tell us is that a variety of performers were customarily admitted to the courts of bishops and secular nobility. Their descriptions, the one positive and the other negative, disclose that the arguments of Thomas of Chobham and the others were not new and that the penitential writers' attempts at classification merely accommodated what was already common practice. Therefore, the practical view presented by the moralists grew out of the need to justify the disvalued but cathected practice of employing performers. As Adam of Bremen shows us, these theoretical writings come after the fact. Hence one must conclude that any movement of minstrels toward society's centre was made independently of such writings.

As long as both censure and tolerance appear simultaneously, we cannot claim that employment for minstrels increased or that their working situation improved as a result of the discussion outlined above. In fact, according to Schubert, the tendency for radical conservatives in Christian society to enforce a strict moral code is timeless with the result that a split or division within the Church always exists.⁹² Sometimes the strict conservatives dominate and sometimes the more liberals. A cautionary note is in order at this point. The two types of sources examined thus far, the ecclesiastical record and individual authorities, do not yield a complete picture. Other documents like family chronicles indicate that minstrelsy continued to suffer such ill repute that some nobles are recorded to have sent minstrels away from wedding feast unrecompensed so that the host would be seen as exceptionally pious.⁹³ It is also necessary to supplement our information from city statutes, guild records, and account books to determine how minstrels actually fared in the period between 1160 and 1400.

Conclusion

Since the individual voices express practical concerns, one would expect them to contain a few perceptive observations of the phenomenon of minstrelsy. But they leave such an expectation unfulfilled. The picture these writers present is one of minstrels constituting a nexus of traits contrary to social values, and it reveals little about the number and variety of actual entertainers who performed before audiences. Although the writers surveyed supply us with a variety of opinions and varying degrees of emotional involvement, what we learn from them is that both the stricter and the more tolerant views are really not very far apart; they share the same symbolic thinking and, therefore, the same premises. They judge the function and activities of entertainers by the ethical-aesthetic criteria of moderation and didactic

⁹² Schubert, p. 119.

⁹³ See the evaluation of Frederick II's wedding celebration by Bumke in *Höfische Kultur*, p. 317.

content. Measured against these standards or constraints, performers are easily shown to be deficient and without usefulness (*inutilis*) as a class. The opinions of these writers, except for Aquinas, are still founded on the premise that entertainers are dissolute and entertainment leads audiences to temptation. Their primary argument—one that allows a few reputable minstrels to entertain by claiming them to be an exception to the rule—does double duty, for it also justifies and reinforces the rule for the remainder of the class.

As we have seen the secular laws marginalize minstrels because a justice system that relies on fixed habitation, membership in a community, and strong family ties to protect its population cannot protect minstrels. The ecclesiastical records turn performers into a symbol of transgression. Individual churchmen, writing to alleviate for the clergy the tension between Church prohibitions and their employment of entertainers, succeed primarily in perpetuating the symbol and offer very little information about actual performances of any kind.

To be given membership in official society, entertainers must have a clearly articulated social function. The churchmen surveyed gave no definitive answer to the question of function or permissible genres of performance. Their writings do indicate, however, that for moral theologians, the appropriate criterion to apply is the concept of moderation. They point to a fault line between moderation and excess where minstrels always fall to the side of excess. Moderation in the sources surveyed is not defined. They do not tell us where they think the line is to be drawn. But since this line is used to distinguish the licit from illicit behaviour, it is important to discover more precisely where it lies. If we can discover that, we can determine how that fault dictated what minstrels do or how they were evaluated. This is the topic of the next chapter.

Since minstrels have no clearly designated place or function in society, and since it has become clear that the image created by the Church was not the only force that marginalized them, it is reasonable to propose that minstrels operated under different principles. These principles and habits were governed by rules antithetical to the rules of the centre. The place then to discover these antithetical principles would be performance practice. In other words, if histrionics and other behaviours are unavoidable for performers, even though they are viewed as unacceptable by society, then the stigma is also unavoidable. But in this case, the stigma would result from the actual behaviour of performers. To pursue this thesis—that performance practice in Germany 1160–1400 is antithetical to the Church's definition of morality—we need to get as close to the perspective and activities of performers as possible. But how is it possible to discover what minstrels actually did as performers if medieval sources do not yield this information? There are other means to add evidence and detail to our knowledge. Performance theory gives us the framework and the fresh perspective to do this. Performance and the life of a performer have certain basic, universal characteristics (like travel or itinerancy) that apply to medieval entertainers as well. When these characteristics are applied, the fault line appears between what society and Church hold to be morally and socially correct, and what minstrels must

do in order to perform successfully. In the following chapter performance theory will be used to discover value judgments attached to theatrical behaviour not ever considered before.

Liberty to do as one pleases
is justified if moderation controls the act

John of Salisbury

In 1980, a well-meaning fund-raiser came to see me and said, 'Miss Graham, the most powerful thing you have going for you to raise money is your respectability'. I wanted to spit. Respectable! Show me any artist who wants to be respectable.

Martha Graham

CHAPTER THREE

The Minstrel's Perspective: Performance and Morality

Over the centuries, the opinions in the Church records, adhering closely to the opinions of the Church Fathers, did not relax their use of the stereotype to disvalue and condemn minstrels. The purpose had been to curtail their activities on the grounds that as itinerants and vagrants they could not be controlled. The Church was rightfully worried about its inability to control entertainers because their popularity also continued unabated over the centuries. For their part, individual churchmen (like Adam of Bremen) tried to resolve the contradiction that entertainers were socially disvalued and yet cathected at one and the same time. The writers of penitentials attempted to define the function of performers so as to make allowances for the fact that the public was strongly attracted to performances and supported performers. However, these texts offer little description and no systematic classification of minstrels and their activities that would reveal the dramatic characteristics of an actual performance.

What we have learned is that the ecclesiastical record condemned minstrels just as much for what the Church authorities thought they were doing as for what they were actually doing. And individual theologians did not define adequately the categories of licit and illicit performative activity. Regardless of the dishonourable, pariah status of minstrels, the general population continued to delight in their presentations.

Thus if performers were disvalued and cathected at the same time, the guardians of social stability and morality must have encountered more specific transgressions as well. Some of the reasons for reproach must also be sought in specific aspects of performers' lives and work. Most likely, any unacceptable traits and actions have to do with performative activities. Itinerancy, as already noted, was a fact of minstrel life that clashed with social norms. And if normative society and its laws looked upon itinerancy with disfavour and distrust, then what other aspects of minstrelsy caused conflict? To answer this question it is necessary to locate and describe the actual, specific traits and actions that society found objectionable. How is it possible to determine what minstrels actually did as performers? Medieval sources do not contain much information on this subject. There are, however, other means for adding evidence and detail to our knowledge. It is possible to approach this question from a new, and different perspective: performance of all types and the life of a performer have certain basic, universal characteristics (in addition to travel). These we can apply to medieval performers, and when we do, we discover a discrete fault line between what society holds to be morally correct and what minstrels must do in order to perform successfully.

In the twelfth century labourers and trades acquired greater legitimacy in secular society. The rising status of the merchant is perhaps the most familiar example of this change. Within the framework of God's salvation plan, churchmen began to place greater emphasis on the physical world, including body movement. They formulated a theory of moral comportment and gesture that, unfortunately, again placed minstrels squarely in breach of cultural norms. This new interest in the physical body needs to be studied from the perspective of the performers themselves. It allows us also to test the thesis that marginalization of performers has its foundation to a great extent in the demands of performance practice. But how can we discover the performer's perspective and methods? Contemporary performance theory provides the framework for outlining the fundamental requirements for a successful performance and compensates, when used judiciously, for the lack of medieval performance manuals. In studying these two discourses, my goal is to reformulate the prohibitions against and criticisms of performers and their audiences using performance theory as a foundation. This is a theoretical perspective that has not yet been taken into account with regard to minstrels. In order to understand better what minstrels were actually doing it is necessary to use a new approach. We need to locate points of overlap between the moralists' criticism of minstrel behaviour and the principles of performance practice. Performance theory tells us in general what performers needed to do. It also enables us to deal with the variety of opinions about the uses and effects of entertainment that range from attempts to define an acceptable function for performance to total demonization of performers in reaction to their liminality.

A second reason for turning to performance theory has to do with filling in the lacunae of previous research. The discourse on the function of minstrels has been studied by scholars who have assumed that any individual would avoid the status of

pariah at all costs, and that minstrels always attempted to find a niche within society. They sought signs of progressing social acceptability and stability, and found them. Hartung, Schreier-Hornung, and Schubert argue that social changes aiding the valorization of secular activities created a more receptive climate for minstrels, and for musicians in particular.¹ This search for expressions of increasing tolerance and leniency towards minstrels, instructive though it is, has a serious drawback: it reflects the prejudice of the social insider whose perspective is presented in the written sources, and who, by definition, is not a performer. At the same time, it neglects the possibility that minstrels made positive use of the flexibility that came with lack of ties and status. Certainly, one should not minimize the poverty, vulnerability, and serious physical and social discomfort of living in the interstices, but the performers themselves, when they sought a niche, probably wanted it on their own terms. Jerzy Grotowski, in speaking of his 'poor theatre', explains that performance and mainstream life are antithetical:

The poor theatre does not offer the actor the possibility of overnight success. It defies the bourgeois concept of a standard of living. It proposes the substitution of material wealth by moral wealth as the principal aim in life. Yet who does not cherish a secret wish to rise to sudden affluence? [...] Who does not hope to live at least as well tomorrow as he does today? Even if one consciously accepts such a status, one unconsciously looks around for that unattainable refuge which reconciles fire with water and 'holiness' with the life of the 'courtesan'.²

I suggest that the essential conditions enabling minstrels to perform well also forced marginal status on them. Therefore, even though the risks and hazards may have been severe, the potential benefits of living in the interstices must have been critical to their work. Consequently, to avoid the hardships altogether would have meant giving up minstrelsy. But despite the hardships, minstrels as a group survived. Some of the truly excellent artists, like Walther von der Vogelweide and Konrad von Würzburg even achieved recognition and rewards, and since they did, their condition of marginality during at least part of their career must have provided some components necessary for their metier. In other words, performers were in many ways successful not despite their marginality, but actually because of it. If this is the case, then we must study the requirements of performance from the practitioner's perspective and ask: what does performance consist of? What essential dramatic techniques are required? And within what context did the representatives of the

¹ Wolfgang Hartung, *Die Spielleute: Fahrende Sänger des Mittelalters* (Düsseldorf: Artemis & Winkler, 2003); Antonie Schreier-Hornung, *Spielleute, Fahrende, Aussenseiter: Künstler der mittelalterlichen Welt* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1981); Ernst Schubert, *Fahrendes Volk im Mittelalter* (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 1995).

² Jerzy Grotowski, 'The Theatre's New Testament', in *Ritual, Play, and Performance. Readings in the Social Sciences/Theatre*, ed. by Richard Schechner and Mady Schuman (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), pp. 190–91.

Church and courts assess these practices? Can we get closer to the strategies minstrels used to attract their audiences? Answers to these questions must be sought in both types of sources, contemporary performance theory and medieval documents.

Naturally, performance theory is written by actors and theatre directors (rarely by scholars) who actively stage performances in all forms whereas medieval texts on comportment and morality were written by theologians who were often strongly opposed to performance. Performance theorists and directors have been studying a great variety of genres and performance styles from all over the world. The encompassing definition of performance (or theatre) they gained has been moving both performance theory and practice toward a new practice of mixing media and breaking down the division between spectator and performer. This definition in its breadth and variety corresponds to what we know of medieval performance art. Consequently modern theory is applicable to the Middle Ages. When the theologians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries speak of the attraction of the performing arts, they include all types of performances, including instrumental music, singing, acting and mime, recitation to musical accompaniment, storytelling, dance, and scenic performance, but no orthodox theatre as normally defined in the nineteenth and the early twentieth century.³ The process of performing or staging one of any combination of these I call a performance, a theatrical event or scenic event according to the usage of contemporary theorists. The theatrical event also includes both performer and audience, for without them no performance can happen.⁴ Their mutual influence in the entire space and time they share during a particular theatrical event makes that event unique and unrepeatable. Nevertheless, performances share characteristic techniques and modes of interaction that performance theory has systematically described. Essential to understanding the performance or scenic event are the following three categories: the performer's physical movement and his liminality as he moves in and out of roles, the interaction between performer and audience, and the reconstructed, pretend nature of a theatrical event. These three categories will be used to analyse the criticisms of the theologians.

³ Modern performance theory includes 'all theatrical phenomena where the so-called *presentational* aspect variously prevails over the representational aspect; where *turning inward* (self-reflexivity or self-referentiality) prevails over turning outward; where production (of meaning, reality, etc.) prevails over reproduction'. This includes celebrations, ceremonies, rituals, happenings and performance art. Marco de Marinis, *The Semiotics of Performance*, trans. by A'ine O'Healy (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 48–49.

⁴ I use scenic or theatrical event to refer to what Richard Schechner calls the entire performance aggregate which consists of performer, site and time of the production, and the audience. Every performance consists of these four elements, see Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), p. 119.

Performance Theory

Performance is reconstructed, staged behaviour.⁵ No matter how spontaneous and natural a theatrical event might appear, it is never totally unrehearsed. Things happen for the first time mostly in 'real life'. A performance never happens for the first time. Staged or theatrical behaviour requires skills and practice and is always structured, repeated and re-behaved behaviour. Since performance is conscious, it can never be completely spontaneous. Both audience and performer know that it is consciously constructed, and that the performative event, or spectacle does and does not happen before the spectator's eyes. Many types of performance do not totally disguise the fact that they are 'as if' and not 'real'. Not all cultures or genres want to cover up the impression that one is not watching real life but a staged show. However, in the modern West, performance is not supposed to look like what it is. What this means is that the performer creates an 'as if' situation in which only the impression of reality is real.

The performer's task then is to create the impression of reality, of a spontaneous and natural action. He achieves this 'as if' effect through disciplined training, practice, and rehearsal. In the rehearsal process a performance script (not a text)⁶ is produced that eventually creates the performance event itself. The scenic event results from rehearsed, conscious, twice-behaved behaviour. Although rehearsed, the performance appears natural, fresh, 'as if for the first time' and not calculated. Every scenic event, even an instrumental concert, requires that the performer project a stage persona. Every performer must present an image that is more and different than his ordinary self. When for example, the performer steps before the audience, a special, public presence is necessary to command the spectators' attention even before the first word is said or the first note played. In its simplest form, this stage persona is created by body movement. Depending on the genre, the stage persona may differ only slightly from the performer's ordinary identity or it may differ significantly, as when an actor plays a character in orthodox theatre. But no matter how large or small the distance between the ordinary self and the stage persona, the performer experiences a different mode of being and a doubling of identity. During performance he may even project multiple identities simultaneously. This performance consciousness, which Schechner calls transportation is experienced differently by different performers.⁷ Performance consciousness exists on a continuum in which the two extremes may be described as sincere and cynical. In the one case, the performer may feel almost united with his persona, experiencing the

⁵ For the following I rely heavily on Richard Schechner's work, on *Between and Performance Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1988).

⁶ A performance script is produced during rehearsal and is not to be mistaken for a literary text, Schechner, *Between*, p. 120.

⁷ Schechner, *Between*, p. 4.

one as a legitimate extension of the other. The other extreme occurs when the person never forgets the gap between ordinary identity and the persona he projects, and may even consider it a lie.⁸ The audience, too, may be consistently aware of the illusion during performance or may accept it as real. The experience of both performers and audience can be likened to Berthold Brecht's familiar concept of the *Verfremdungseffekt* by which he attempts to break down the illusion of reality during performance.

A simple example from age-old tradition of dancing with animal masks demonstrates the doubling of identity or projection of multiple identities during performance. Based on the images in the cave of Les Trois frères we know that deer antlers and other animal masks have been used for dancing for over ten thousand years. Already in that primitive society the performer had an ordinary or everyday identity and status because he was probably known to all members of the community, but during the dance he crossed a threshold and became, in some sense, the animal as dancers in the Yaqui deer dance do today.⁹ But when is the dancer a deer, when is he a man, in which moments is he perhaps both simultaneously, or is he in a liminal state between the two? The performer's identity, according to Schechner, is in constant oscillation between the two identities. The performer is said to 'characterize', 'represent', 'imitate' something or 'impersonate' someone. As Schechner explains, such circumlocutions signify that 'performers can't really say who they are'.¹⁰ The performer is himself and 'as if' at the same time.¹¹ As a result, the spectator experiences the performer in between the two worlds of reality and make-believe but never in his true or ordinary self.

The process of performing thus changes the performer's consciousness. For the performer it keeps open possibilities and alternatives especially in rehearsal. The rehearsal frame allows bits to be changed, new ideas tried out and actions redone. Thus rehearsal removes the performer from the finality of ordinary life where an action cannot be rehearsed and can rarely be redone, where life is literally a once in a lifetime experience. Put another way, the intentional open-endedness and preservation of multiple possibilities that are essential to rehearsal but also found in

⁸ Acting 'as if' or playing a role is not limited to the professional actor. Erving Goffmann explains that people perform in daily life as well as in special, delineated situations. A most obvious example of the cynical actor is the confidence man who is constantly aware that he is manipulating his listener. See 'Performances' in *Ritual*, ed. by Schechner and Schuman, pp. 88–96.

⁹ For an extensive discussion of the Yaqui deer dance performances, see Schechner, *The Future of Ritual: Writings on Culture and Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), Chapter 4, pp. 94–130.

¹⁰ Schechner, *Between*, p. 4.

¹¹ For a complete discussion of the liminality of performers and the twice-behaved behaviour that creates a performance, see Schechner, *Between*, Chapter 2, pp. 35–116.

the performance event itself offer the performer the sense of creating life and overcoming fate.¹² At the same time, the performance is analogous to reality: it is the centre of the world in that each performance is unique and unrepeatable. Even rituals that are intended to be unchanging do change with repetition.

From a performer's and a performance theoretical perspective, the site of a performance, (the performance space) is the centre of the world. For this to be true, every performance must attract an audience. During performance the site and timing together with the performer set up a centripetal force that draws the audience in, and when successful, creates its own reality. By this I mean that the audience and performer are transported to a different level of consciousness, one that has been referred to as the willing suspension of disbelief. This is the kind of consciousness experienced during play: 'Spectators are very aware of the moment when a performance takes off. A "presence" is manifest, something has "happened". The performers have touched or moved the audience, and some kind of collaboration, a collective special theatrical life is born'.¹³

The centripetal force of the scenic event pulls the world into its sphere; it re-creates the world and rearranges it. A rearrangement occurs already during the creation of the production in the performance script-making process, but it is experienced by the audience during performance. During performance things can happen that do not occur in ordinary life. At that time the norms and rules are opened to question. Playwrights today know this as did medieval performers as well as theologians like John of Salisbury for, as we shall see, John used the metaphor of the sirens to demonstrate that a performance transports the listener to an extra-ordinary life experience. According to Schechner, performance consciousness activates alternatives that operate simultaneously. When a theatrical event—an 'as if for the first time but rehearsed'—is being performed, the subjunctive situation opens up space. In this space new things can happen regardless of the pre-arranged performance script.¹⁴ The performer at work always experiences this transportation or indeterminacy, but if the performance is intense enough, it can transport the audience, too. Such transportation questions cultural norms, and once that happens in performance, a rearranging, or even complete restructuring of the normative system may occur. In this case, the performers are transformed and with them the audience. This potential transformation is responsible for both the attraction of the stage and its subversive power.¹⁵

It is precisely this process of transportation, caused by the subjunctive and reflexive nature of performance, that can restructure reality. For example, when Orpheus fails to conquer death as he fails to bring back his wife, he confirms the

¹² Schechner, *Between*, p. 6.

¹³ Schechner, *Between*, pp. 10–11.

¹⁴ Schechner, *Between*, p. 6.

¹⁵ Schechner, *Performance*, pp. 164–65.

rules of the physical world and mortality of humans. But because he himself made the trip and returned, he did change reality. His audience experiences the ‘almost’ or ‘as if he could’ succeed, but ultimately his failure in one goal returns the audience to an unchanged world; but because he returns changed, the audience observes a changed world in the end. This transportation into the subjunctive world during performance thus opens up new possibilities. The spectator need not, however, experience a prolonged enchantment or loss of reflective consciousness, or free will as John of Salisbury phrases it.

The following section explores the minstrel’s activity as a basis for evaluating the moral criticism raised by theologians. First we examine the performing body at its most basic level of activity—gesture and physical movement. The next level, liminality and endangered identity, builds upon this movement and places the performer into a cultural-historical context where we find him creating postures, and going in and out of roles. This process of role-playing makes him indeterminate and liminal and, therefore, morally questionable to the dominant group in medieval society, especially the theologians, some of whom propagate the extreme opinion that minstrels serve the devil.

The Performing Body

The performer’s every move is governed by the need to satisfy the spectator, for without an audience, no performance can take place. The essential means of attracting an audience is movement. I am concerned here with the kind of performative movement or stance that commands attention as spectators gather before the formal performance begins. This performative movement is special, non-ordinary behaviour; it is movement that must distinguish itself starkly from everyday movement in posture, gesture, balance, and facial expression. Its extreme form is acrobatics. Defined in this way, performative movement flies in the face of Church-defined ideals as well as broader, culturally defined norms of behaviour in all periods. The importance of these specific codes of gesture lies in the fact that they form and preserve cultural identity. Examples of cultural code include manners of walking, the use of specific types of eating utensils, attitudes toward handedness, and gestures of greeting, to name just a few. Since members of every community consider their code to be natural and proper rather than uniquely defined by their culture, it is rarely taught explicitly and rarely written about. It is, therefore, actually rather difficult to discuss accepted behavioural norms because every culture, social class, and geographic region within the medieval world had its own code. Luckily, scholars have recently begun to investigate the topic of comportment and gesture in the Middle Ages. They have shown that in a shift from an earlier avoidance of discussing physical movement and gesture, by the end of the twelfth century the body as object of study was rehabilitated. Medieval writers began to think and write seriously about proper body comportment and gesture. At first the rules of

comportment were applied to the clergy but soon by the thirteenth century they were also applied to the lay nobility.¹⁶

Medieval culture relied heavily on all types of formalized gesture and ritual movement in both public and private situations: in sacred services, private prayers, legal hearings, formal oaths, and informal greetings. Gestures were used to maintain class distinctions and to make guests welcome.¹⁷ Medieval writings on comportment allow us to distinguish between approved, everyday movement and the extraordinary or extra-daily movement and comportment required in a performance setting. For moral theologians like Gerald of Wales and Hugh of St Victor, proper comportment was crucial to virtue because it made visible in the individual the Platonic ideal of harmony and moderation. This is an idea already cherished by the Church Fathers, but now it is explicitly applied to the body. Both Gerald and Hugh evaluate others by their demeanour and comportment because the moral and aesthetic category of moderation governed both secular and Church-defined norms of behaviour so that outwardly visible comportment and gesture signalled a person's inner, moral worth. We turn to Gerald first, to ascertain the specific kinds of movement he objects to when he vividly and indignantly describes what he considered immoderate comportment and gesturing among the monks of Christchurch in Canterbury.

Gerald of Wales (c. 1147–1222) was well versed in canon law and, as a reformer, wrote always with a didactic purpose even in his autobiographical works. Having travelled extensively in both France and England, Gerald was a well-known man who enjoyed a considerable readership. It is certain that the following account did

¹⁶ See Jean Claude Schmitt, *La Raison des gestes dans l'occident médiéval* (Paris: Galimard 1990), esp. Chapter 5, and in a special issue on gesture his 'Introduction and General Bibliography', *History and Anthropology*, 1 (1984), 1–28. See also Fritz Graf, 'Gestures and Conventions: The Gestures of Roman Actors and Orators' in *A Cultural History of Gesture*, ed. by Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp 36–58.

¹⁷ Writers like Peter the Chanter, Hugh of St Victor, Thomasin von Zerklare who wrote about body movement and gesture were well aware of the rhetorical symbol of minstrel. In addition they also had the idea of a cultural sign, namely that certain body movements have meaning as cultural signals in a number of contexts. Furthermore, they recognized that cultural refinement depends on disciplining the body to make use of these signals. See Joachim Bumke, 'Höfischer Körper—Höfische Kunst' in *Modernes Mittelalter. Neue Bilder einer populären Epoche*, ed. by Joachim Heinzle (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1994), p 72. For discussions of specialized gestures, see Richard C. Trexler, 'Legitimizing Prayer Gestures in the Twelfth Century. The *De penitentia* of Peter the Chanter', *History and Anthropology*, 1 (1984) 97–126; Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand, 'Gebärdensprache im mittelalterlichen Recht', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 17 (1982), 363–79, and Dobozy, 'From Oral Custom to Written Law: The German *Sachsenspiegel*', in *Oral History of the Middle Ages: The Spoken Word in Context*, ed. by Gerhard Jaritz and Michael Richter, *Medium Aevum Quotidianum*, Sonderband 12 (2001), 154–64.

not remain unread. He wrote his autobiography in his mature years (c. 1205) and chose to refer to himself throughout the text in the third person, a distancing technique that tends to startle the modern reader. Gerald was familiar with the symbol of minstrelsy and used it as a caustic means of reproach when he reported what he thought disgraceful behaviour of the Canterbury monks. Important for our purposes is the fact that he couched his disapproval in terms of general excesses comparing them specifically to *histriones* and *joculatores*. Since Gerald does not mention any performative activity during his stay at Canterbury, his comments are a clear example that *joculator* or *histrion* as a symbol of excess is firmly ensconced in the moral reference system in the Latin of the clergy.

The setting is dinner: on his return home from Paris, Gerald was welcomed at Canterbury by the prior and monks and invited to eat with them. To his annoyance he found the monks eating and drinking to excess, and gesturing like minstrels:

Ubi sedens cum priore et maioribus in disco principali duo, sicut ipse referre consueverat, ibi notavit, signorum sc. superfluitatem nimiam, et ferculorum numerositatem. Tot etenim prior ad monachos servientes, et illi e contra ad mensas inferiores exenia ferendo, et hi quibus ferebantur gratias referendo, digitorum et manuum ac brachiorum gesticulationibus et sibilis ore pro sermonibus longe levius atque licentius quam deceret effluebant; ut quasi ad ludos scenicos aut inter histriones et joculatores sibi videretur constitutus. Esset itaque magis ordini consonum et honestati verbis humanis cum modestia loqui, quam muta in hunc modum garrulitate signis et sibilis tam joculariter uti.¹⁸

[And as he sat there at the high table with the prior and the seniors, he noted two things, the multitude of the dishes and the excessive superfluity of signs which the monks made to one another. For there was the prior giving so many dishes to the serving monks, and they in turn bearing these as gifts to the lower tables; and there were those, to whom these gifts were brought offering their thanks, and all of them gesticulating with fingers, hands and arms, and whispering one to another in lieu of speaking, all extravagating in a manner more free and frivolous than was seemly; so that Giraldus seemed to be seated at a scenic event (*ludos scenicos*) or among minstrels (*histriones*) and performers (*joculatores*). It would therefore be more consonant with good order and decency to speak modestly in human speech than with signs and whisperings thus jocosely to indulge in dumb garrulity.]¹⁹

The simile is significant. Even though the terms *joculatores* and *histriones* are already entrenched in the Church's ideological symbolism by this time, we need to

¹⁸ Cited according to *de rebus a se gestis*, Book II, Chapter 5 in *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, ed. by J. S. Brewer (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1861–91), vol. 1, pp. 3–122, (p. 51).

¹⁹ Translation taken from *The Autobiography of Giraldus Cambrensis*, ed. and trans. by H. E. Butler (London: Cape, 1937), p. 71. I have put my preferred translations of certain terms in parentheses.

explain why it is that when monks misbehave, performers come to mind. Readers could understand the full reproach in the simile only if they already associated minstrels as a concept regularly with everything that is immoderate and wicked. Gerald uses the simile to cast the Canterbury monks in the role of shameless transgressors.²⁰

The essence of Gerald's criticism focuses on moderation as the foundation of comportment. Each of the monastic orders had rules regulating in detail the behaviour of monks—including body movement—so that Gerald bases his criticism on both canonically and culturally defined codes of comportment. Gesticulation and chatter are inappropriate we are told, but what are the monks actually doing? Eating, drinking, lifting their cups to toast their benefactor, and chatting in whispers. The principles Gerald mentions at the end tell us that he is mostly concerned with style, with bodily comportment, and not content since the content appears to be innocuous: monks express thanks to a generous host, for example. But the manner of whisperings and gesticulation of fingers, hands, and arms all contribute not only to levity and frivolity, but to inarticulate garrulity. Gerald may appear to us to be overly concerned about minutiae in his discussion of behaviour and gesture, but in fact, he focuses precisely on what was then and still is the foundation of the performer's art. The type of gesticulation is not important, but the term *gesticulatio*, as opposed to *gestus*, is. *Gesticulatio* was applied in the twelfth and thirteenth century almost exclusively to actions and vices attributed to minstrels. Associated with sinful desire, it even describes devilish movement²¹. From the ninth to the thirteenth century *gestus* was basically neutral, but more often than not, it was accompanied by a pejorative adjective.²²

The point is that every gesture, facial expression, movement of limb, and sound of voice that Gerald designates reprehensible is so because it breaks totally with the principles of moderation and self-control. Hence the force of Gerald's comparison lies in the lack of moderation and self-discipline displayed. Most moralists like Gerald urge, of course, the opposite of stage behaviour, and thereby juxtapose Church regulations to exaggerated performative movement. And if gesticulation is

²⁰ Such similes are not new, for comparisons between churchmen and actor-poets were made already in the eighth century but they point out improper behaviour without making it into a grave transgression as, for example, in Canon 12 of Clovesho (747): *saecularium poetarum modo in ecclesia garrile*. (to gab in church like secular poets.) Cited according to J. D. A. Ogilvy, 'Mimi, Scurrae, Histriones: Entertainers of the Early Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 38 (1963), 603–19, (p. 607). See Ogilvy for additional eighth-century examples.

²¹ Schmitt, 'Gestus—Gesticulatio. Contribution à l'étude du vocabulaire latin médiéval des gestes'. in *La lexicographie du latin médiéval et ses rapports avec les recherches actuelles sur la civilisation du Moyen Âge*. ed. by Yves Lefèvre (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1981), pp. 377–90 (385).

²² Schmitt, *Gestus*, p. 386.

improper for all Christians, then it is also improper for entertainers. But these are judgements made from the authoritative centre.

For minstrels the requirements of performance are primary. In order to be successful, a scenic event must be carefully and thoughtfully arranged in order to attract, engage, and direct the audience's attention. Medieval performers, like street performers today, could not rely on sale of tickets or any pre-reserved space, and so each performer did indeed have to lure his spectators into the scenic event.²³ Since the pressure to capture and to captivate was extremely urgent in some performance contexts, no performer survived without knowing how to create stage presence in which the body appears alive and vital. He achieves much of this initially with movement that amplifies the body. Consequently, to produce a successful, gripping performance requires the very opposite of socially correct conduct as outlined in authoritative texts.

Performance is bigger than life. Hence, movement of the body must be different from everyday movement because its goal is to break the automatic responses of daily life.²⁴ Performance theory calls this extra-daily or kinesic behaviour. Kinesic or extra-daily movement produces 'a quality of energy which makes the performer's entire body come alive, even in immobility'.²⁵ Hence the energy and intensity of performance movement need not produce wild action, it must at the least create a vital bodily presence in order to attract the attention of spectators. Gerald of Wales intuits this in his commentary and implies that such energy should not be left uncontrolled. The term extra-daily, used by Eugenio Barba to define the essence of theatrical movement in a positive fashion, retains even today the concept of transgressing the boundary of behavioural norms. This is a very tangible, physical aspect of performance, and yet is unacceptable from the perspective of the strict Church code as well as the less rigid cultural norms.

What kind of movement is performative movement? Can we apply these kinesic principles to what medieval entertainers might have done? Eugenio Barba studied the techniques that underlie many different styles of scenic or performative behaviour in India, China, Japan, Southeast Asia, southwestern USA, western and central Europe. He discovered that performers in all the cultures he studied, including primitive and advanced, in Orient and Occident, follow the same principles of achieving a successful performance.²⁶ These principles apply to all types of

²³ According to E. Kummer's experience a performer on the street or at a market has twenty minutes to attract an audience (personal communication).

²⁴ Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese, *A Dictionary of Theater Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer*, ed. by Richard Gough, trans. by Richard Fowler (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 17, 19.

²⁵ Barba, *Dictionary* 14; see also Schechner's chapter 'Kinesics and Performance', *Essays on Performance Theory, 1970–1976* (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1977), pp. 99–107.

²⁶ Barba outlines the basic principles for performers in *The Paper Canoe: A Guide to Theater Anthropology*, trans. by Richard Fowler (New York: Routledge, 1995).

theatrical events in the broadest sense of the term: to acting, dance, mime, single-performer shows, cabarets, stand-up comedians, and to a lesser extent, to instrumental performance. In sum, they apply to all performances even though styles differ from culture to culture. And because these principles are universal, they apply to medieval performance practices. Of course, these fundamentals do not allow any reconstruction of performances past, so again, as with many historical studies, our discussion must remain general and conjectural. Yet at the same time, for our efforts we gain surer knowledge of the range of possibilities. The goal then is to characterize with at least some precision the techniques underlying the movements and gestures necessary for performance that theologians reacted against.

Barba has broken down the foundation of stage presence into four principles that are necessary for all performers, for without them performance is not possible.²⁷ The first principle is extra-daily movement. Daily movement, based on doing as much work with as little energy expenditure as possible, is ordinary, unconscious and functional. Extra-daily movement does the opposite. Totally conscious at all times, it is a luxury because it uses a great deal of energy for each movement. Where daily activity is used to communicate, extra-daily activity informs.²⁸ When energy emanates from the body through extra-daily movement, vitality becomes visible, whether in motion or immobility. The vitality radiates a heightened tension created by the second principle or technique: balance in imbalance. A very slight imbalance makes dynamic movement possible. It is generated by holding the body slightly off centre and pushing it in and out of balance so as to be ready to move in any direction at any time. For example, keeping the knees slightly bent when standing constructs a balanced imbalance or dynamic immobility. This tension is created by opposing forces when the muscles stretch and contract in opposing directions, and the body parts too move toward something and experience a resistance that holds them back at the same time. This tension is visible, for example, in the dynamic, dramatic, motionless minutes or seconds before a cat pounces. It is this readiness and anticipation that intensifies the body and renders it theatrically alive and believable.²⁹ Therefore, because extra-daily behaviour is an analogue to ordinary movement (it is the same human body after all) it is more believable—because visible—than daily, conventional movement.

The third technique is omission or condensation that endows movement with meaning. As the performer selects out the accessory (ancillary) movement in daily behaviour, he pares down gestures to their essentials and makes them visible. The result is a highly condensed, abstract movement.³⁰ What in daily conventional behaviour is unseen and unnoticed is made powerfully visible for scrutiny and

²⁷ Barba, *Canoe*, p. 32.

²⁸ Barba, *Canoe*, p. 11.

²⁹ Barba, *Canoe*, p. 9.

³⁰ Barba, *Canoe*, pp. 30–32.

interpretation in a scenic event. The fourth principle builds on the previous three. The body in producing this consciously abstracted, concentrated movement, must also learn to undercut or break down the automatic responses of daily movement. Where previous principles built on daily movement and amplified it, the fourth principle twists it into its opposite. Barba refers to this as metaphorical equivalence. When automatic movements are undermined and replaced with extra-daily equivalents, each movement gains the potential of metaphoric meaning.³¹ Equivalence means retraining automatic responses. For example the automatic response of stemming an arm against a fall can be retrained to embrace a fall. When this happens, when one movement is replaced with its extra-daily equivalent, the movement gains metaphorical meaning, perhaps a new attitude toward fate, for example. Of course, the meaning of the metaphorical equivalency depends also on the scenic context and can change from performance to performance.

The body must be dynamic to have presence and be worthy of notice. Thus, what projects vitality and what appears believable comes from a tension created by opposing forces, alternating imbalance and balance in the body. Vitality occurs in the push-pull of muscles in the most basic level, but this means an exaggeration or amplification of muscle action, of bodily comportment, of gesture, of behaviour, but at another level it is a reduction of the daily movements to their necessary muscles, most basic motions until only that which matters most, the essence of the movement comes into focus. These techniques create not only the movements and gestures that sustain thespian tension in a performance, but more importantly, they create stage presence, the charismatic moment in which the entertainer steps before the spectators. Consequently it applies to every performer. All this, no matter how positively and constructively described by Barba and other practitioners of theatre arts, remains a break with custom, order and the accepted social code of behaviours. Louis Jouvet expresses the problem as: 'Actor, my friend, my brother, you live only by contrariness, contradiction and constriction. You live only in the 'contra'.³²

One of the earliest theologians to contemplate and formulate a theory of gesture based on Platonic ideals of harmony is Hugh of St Victor (d. 1141). His little book *de institutione novitiorum* for training pupils in monastery schools focuses new interest on the human body. And because he incorporates body comportment and gesture into his moral theory, he acknowledges that the body can be beautiful. It was his most widely read work and influenced vernacular writers in Germany like Thomasin von Zerklare because it presents a broader perspective than a guide intended for training only monks. Hugh offers novitiates and all readers general guidelines for learning to lead a good and moral life not by simply avoiding evil but by actively cultivating the good. His moral code enumerates broad, cultural norms

³¹ Barba, *Canoe*, pp. 32–34.

³² Louis Jouvet, *Le Comédien désincarné* (Paris: Flammarion, 1954), p 241, cited according to Barba, *Canoe*, 24.

and is not specifically connected to the rules of any of the monastic orders. Nowhere does he express any interest in performative movement but his code clearly disallows performances by definition. The book has three parts arranged according to Psalm 118, 66: 'teach me goodness, discipline and knowledge'. The section important for our purposes is the middle one on discipline in which he demonstrates great concern for the mastery of physical and emotional comportment as a moral issue. Of the four areas subsumed under the concept of discipline (clothing, gesture, speech, and table manners) most important for our purposes is gesture where concrete, detailed guidance on proper comportment and body movement is found.

Hugh gives new legitimacy to the body and its disciplined movement in his definition of gesture: *gestus est motus et figuratio membrorum corporis, ad omnem agendi et habendi modum*³³ (Gesture is a movement and configuration of the body parts adapted to every type of action and demeanour). This definition reflects the typical allegorical approach to correlating what is seen (the temporal and visible) with the unseen and eternal nature of things. Like the term 'figure' in 'figure of speech', he deals with techniques for expressing, making tangible what is intangible, namely ideas and meaning. Here Hugh refers to figures of movement and as such they always have a symbolic meaning. Thus gesture configures the entire ensemble of body parts to make visible what hides behind the body, namely the soul. In addition, because gestures are always seen by someone, they harbour an aesthetic component.³⁴

Hugh's moral code begins with a desire for the Good. The foundation of goodness lies in the harmony of mind and body which is learned by means of discipline or self-control. Once achieved, harmony enables one to lead a morally good life when it is supported by knowledge. Discipline then, according to Hugh, is the skill that guarantees correct demeanour in all situations. When practised consistently, it becomes a custom or habit of the body:

Disciplina est conversatio bona et honesta, cui parum est mala non facere, sed studet etiam in iis quae bene agit per cuncta irreprehensibilis apparere. Item disciplina est membrorum omnium motus ordinatus et dispositio decens in omni habitu et actione.³⁵

[Discipline means living a virtuous and honourable life for which it is not enough to refrain from doing evil, but one must also strive to appear irreproachable in all respects even when doing good. Discipline also means the orderly movement of all body parts as well as a proper attitude in every comportment and action.]

Discipline, as Hugh explains, is attained through practice. One learns to control both physical and mental comportment in order to achieve a balance and harmony of

³³ Hugh of St Victor, 'De institutione novitiorum', PL 176, col. 938.

³⁴ See Schmitt's explanation of *figura*, *figuratio* and its greater context in Hugh's text, *Raison*, pp. 178–79.

³⁵ Chapter 10, PL 176, col. 935.

the inner movement of the mind and the outer, visible movement of the body. Establishing this correspondence of inner and outer being accomplishes the moral goal of being a good person. The process is as follows: reason must control the mind, the mind exercises control over the body, then this process establishes by means of self-control the sought after harmony in bearing and action. Once achieved, harmony leads to a continuous exercise of virtue throughout life:

Integritas ergo virtutis est, quando per internam mentis custodiam ordinate reguntur membra corporis. Interior namque est custodia, quae ordinata servat exterius corporis membra.³⁶

[Therefore one can speak of perfect virtue when the members of the body are properly coordinated through the inner control of the mind. For it is the inner control that preserves the external coordination of the body parts.]

Of central importance to Hugh's theory in his use of the term *figura* was the commonly held belief that outer comportment and physical appearance lays open to view the inner, hidden reality of the soul. This is a tenacious belief held by many who speak of body language even today. But in the Middle Ages, it behoved everyone to maintain self-control because indecent and immoderate behaviour revealed, even advertised, an immoderate, immoral, and shameless soul. Hugh explains that when a person lacks discipline, the effects are plainly obvious as the body becomes uncoordinated:

Sicut enim de inconstantia mentis nascitur inordinata motio corporis, ita quoque dum corpus per disciplinam stringitur, animus ad constantiam solidatur.³⁷

[For as the disorderly movement of the body arises from an unsteady mind, in exactly the same way the soul is fortified in its constancy [only] when the body is checked by discipline.]

A person who fails at self-control falls into confusion and clumsiness, and worse yet, inconstancy. In that sad state, he is unable to avoid evil, much less to acquire virtue. Hugh then explains in detail how the body parts must work together in a controlled manner to create harmony; anything less is simply disorder:

Prima igitur est custodia disciplinae in gestu, ut unumquodque membrum in eo ad quod creatum est officia se contineat, neque alterius membri ministerium sui admistione confundat. Id est, ut oculi videant, aures audiant, nares olfaciant, os loquatur, manus operentur, pedes ambulent, quatenus neque transmutentur officia membrorum neque inordinate permisceantur.³⁸

³⁶ Chapter 10, PL 176, col. 935.

³⁷ Chapter 10, PL 176, col. 935.

³⁸ Chapter 12, PL 176, col. 943.

[Therefore, the first respect in which discipline should be observed is gesture, so that each body part should confine itself to the function it has been created for and should not impede another part's function by intervening. This means that the eyes should see, the ears hear, the nostrils smell, the mouth speak, the hands work, the feet walk, because the functions of each body part should not be usurped [by another], nor should they be mixed together in a disorderly manner.]

When all parts of the body move in consort, they produce in the person propriety and tempered, elegant conduct. Self-control is placed under the guidance of moderation, and so it follows that praiseworthy and proper comportment is equated with subdued and restrained movement. Moreover, two rules reaffirm Hugh's underlying motto that it is not enough to refrain from evil, one must constantly do good: each body part should fulfil its assigned task and, in addition, execute it with moderation and propriety:

Primum ergo diligenter observandum est, ut singula membra suum teneant officium, neque usurpent alienum, deinde ut unumquodque suum opus tam decenter ac modeste impleat, quatenus per indisciplinam aspicientium oculos non offendat.³⁹

[Therefore, the first thing to be strictly observed is that each body part should be confined to its function and should not usurp another's. Then that each part should fulfil its task with propriety and moderation lest it offend the eyes of the beholders with its lack of discipline.]

Monks especially are expected to be modest in comportment, stern, honest, quiet, restrained in speech and movement, and moderate in eating and drinking. As the ecclesiastical councils mentioned, they were to avoid worldly pleasure, vanity and deception, and to exhibit disciplined behaviour. Nevertheless these general guidelines were equally applicable to lay men and women, because what he is talking about is posture and comportment—the way a person behaves and presents himself to others. Those individuals who followed these rules of conduct, lay or religious, would have easily won the approval of moralists like Hugh and Gerald of Wales.

In another passage, Hugh demonstrates in greater detail that gesture and comportment are intimately linked with speaking and the content of the spoken word. He describes how a person is to comport himself when speaking, basing all actions on the dictates of moderation. The context is proper comportment, demeanour and speaking in any private social situation, and not a public speech. His two major points are that form must be appropriate to content, and that moderation must guide comportment. Since moderation restrains all movement within Hugh's framework, it also limits the range of actions and their intensity:

Disciplina jubet ut loquentis sit gestus modestus et humilis, sonus demissus et suavis, significatio verax et dulcis. Modestiam debet habere gestus loquentis, ut nec

³⁹ Chapter 12, PL 176, col. 941.

inordinate, nec impudice, nec turbulenter inter loquendum membra moveat, neque oculorum nutibus, aut indecenti conformatione sive transmutatione vultus, placorem sui sermonis imminat. Humilis debet esse gestus loquentis, ut apud auditores gratiam sermo ejus inveniatur. Sonus loquentis esse debet demissus, ne strepitu, et immoderata clamositate auditores suos aut injuste terreat aut juste offendat. Suavis debet esse, ne prolationis asperitate tanto fiat animis audientium onerosior, quanto ad aures durior venit, et injucundior. Significatio, id est sententia sermonis, ideo debet esse vera, quia fallax verbum etiam si facunde aut composite dicitur, nihilominus tamen ab auditore aut noxium aut otiosum (si fuerit intellectum) reputatur. sed et cum veritate necesse est, ut sermo loquentis dulcedinem habeat, quia saepe etiam veritas auditori amara efficitur, si aut sine ratione, aut sine dilectione, hoc est, vel importune, vel impie contra eum proferatur.⁴⁰

[Discipline requires that the comportment of a speaker be moderate and humble, his tone of voice muted and gentle (*suavis*), his meaning true and agreeable. The gesturing (*gestus*) of the speaker should be characterized by moderation so that he move his limbs neither in a disorderly fashion, nor improperly, nor violently while speaking. Nor should he undermine the calmness of his speech by the movements of his eyes or by an indecent aspect or changes in his facial expression. The speaker's comportment should be humble so that his speech may find acceptance with the listeners. The sound of the speaker's voice, should be muted lest he unjustly frighten or justly offend his listeners with noise or immoderate shouting. It should be gentle, lest by its harsh utterance it become quite burdensome to the spirits of his hearers to the same extent that it would be particularly harsh and unpleasant to their ears. The content, that is, the meaning of the speech, should be true, because a misleading word, even if it is composed eloquently or ornately, is nevertheless considered damaging and futile by the hearer (if understood at all). However, it is necessary that the speaker's language should be agreeable in addition to being true because the truth can often sound bitter to the listener, if it is presented against him either without a reason or without kindness, that is, either inopportune or unjustly.]

According to this passage, moderation produces virtue in action and speech. Movements guided by moderation are modest, humble, pleasant, sweet, well-composed, orderly, muted, well-spoken, and pleasing. When speaking, the movements of the body parts, the limbs, head, face, eyes, must all be co-ordinated with the actions of the voice including timbre, volume, and diction. Once everything has its place and task, a harmony of the whole is produced. The generalization can be drawn, although not explicitly stated, that any type of excess offends. Hugh also connects in this lesson the actions of the body with the content of what is spoken. Thus one must speak truly because false words even when carefully ordered and well-spoken are not acceptable and considered superfluous by listeners. At the same time, Hugh leaves room for individual style. He lays out only the basic principles of movement and composure: outer movement of gesture that must correspond to the

⁴⁰ Chapter 17, PL 176, col. 948.

inner virtues. This correspondence then allows the inner, invisible virtues to become perceptible in a person's words and actions. When words and actions fail to establish a correspondence between the inner and outer person, that person is consequently disparaged for posturing and dissembling.

To be avoided are immoderate, uncoordinated, and disordered gestures and movements. These are described precisely in order to demonstrate how all the various parts of the body and elements of movement and voice must be ordered and balanced in a harmonious composition. People who lack self-control and moderation are given to extremes: they make faces, roll their eyes, open their mouths wide, tear at their hair, point with their fingers while they speak, flail with their arms. The most serious of such breaches is yielding to unbridled facial expressions. Because the face is the mirror of discipline, it cannot hide the person's inner failings. Thus facial expressions more than any other body movement must be controlled.⁴¹

To evaluate Hugh's concept of harmony and moderation from the perspective of performance theory, we must apply the four principles formulated by Barba. And when we do, they turn Hugh's descriptions of comportment into their opposites. What is serene and subdued and, therefore, desirable for Hugh is useless in performance. And conversely, the vitality and dynamic movement necessary for performance become in Hugh's framework, undesirable and even immoral. The contrast thus becomes one of restrained movement versus luxury movement. As already stated, the larger than life luxury expenditure of energy of the performer's body is more believable in a scenic event than restrained, conservative, subdued energy and movement. Thus any luxury movement is immoderate in its vitality and, therefore, cannot be humble or modest. A performance builds tension, amplifies movement, creates oppositions and metaphorical equivalences. In contrast, any movement that is consistently balanced, soft or loud but without contrasts and subdued without oppositions, kills that vitality and loses credibility. The performer understands this and also knows that the means of building the performance body requires at least as much training, discipline and control of mind and body as does the comportment Hugh teaches. Body movements for the performer, although luxury movements, are not excessive in themselves, its the purpose to which they are put that gives them significance. And for this reason the good performer chooses judiciously and arranges his movements thoughtfully.

Regardless of the performer's judicious and sparing use of movement, the break with moderation and order is undeniable in the categories formulated by Barba. What performers do appears as excess, imbalance, and disorder when judged specifically from Hugh's moral framework. His is a framework limited to the perspective of the spectator who attends a scenic event, sees only the production and

⁴¹ Hugh goes on to present an entire system of gestures that he connects to vices; see Schmitt, *Raison* p. 179; Bumke p. 81, and C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950–1200* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), pp. 244–64.

never the process that leads to it. Hence the spectator sees only the conflicting values, and does not see that commonalities exist between Hugh's theory of comportment and performance techniques. But the performer knows of the preparatory process and realizes that self-control is the foundation of what he hopes to achieve in front of spectators. The elements performer and Hugh share in common are judicious choice of movement, careful discipline in body and mind, and therefore, total control in front of an audience. Thus these several commonalities with Hugh's framework exist because the performer also seeks a type of harmony. But these commonalities obtain primarily for aesthetic considerations because for both viewpoints there is no such thing as useless or gratuitous movement. The harmony sought by entertainers is built on disharmony that nevertheless requires rigorous discipline and precision in movement. It follows then, that to judge the performing body one must determine the purpose and goal of the techniques used. And this is the point at which Hugh's definition discloses the chasm between his moral standpoint with its goal of static harmony between body and soul, and the performer's understanding of the techniques and goals of a scenic event.

Hugh's moral goal of harmony must restrict the range of a person's movement. In contrast, performers can tolerate very few limits on their range of movement, for they must be able to present to an audience using body and voice anything from a shrinking violet to a tyrant or even a rock. When the body produces concentrated movement, it projects a vitality that is bigger than life. To bring this essence of life into focus, the performer must repeatedly unleash and capture opposing forces of muscles, spatial directions, and emotions. The result of this vitality is transgression, for every aspect of the performer's technique challenges automatic responses and, therefore, causes problems for anyone expecting moderation and propriety in comportment: the spectator finds only exaggerated alternations and changes of intensity in movements, gestures, sounds, and facial expressions. This opposition of action-reaction is a fundamental, dynamic process totally contrary to stasis. And according to moral theologians, stasis is the logical precondition that makes morality and harmony possible.

The goal of Hugh's discipline is precisely what performers cannot allow: they must not suppress the body in order to create perfectly balanced harmony and stasis. Stasis is antithetical to stage presence and performance practice. Hugh's goal is thus just the opposite of performance practice. For Hugh, the virtuous person maintains, out of habit, a congruence between inner and outer comportment and attitudes. He does not posture or pretend, but presents the 'true self' whereas the performer has learned to act like another, to present different personas, in other words, to dissemble, and for Hugh this is deceit.

Therefore, the entire theory of gesture and comportment, based on the principle of moderation, leaves little room for Barba's four principles to be put into practice. The result is that a minstrel's every performative move breaks the rule of moderation and morality. And since Hugh's theory is applicable to all of official society, from the monastery to the great ecclesiastical and secular courts, his moral theory has serious

implications for minstrels. In fact, Hugh of St Victor's analysis of comportment is our key to locating the fault line between moral theory of conduct professed (if not always practised) by the dominant groups in society and the essential performative techniques of minstrels. To be sure, a literate discussion of courtly values and moral ideals of behaviour had already preceded Hugh's writings. Examples could be cited from Jaeger's study of bishops' lives as well as the Latin *Ruodlieb*, a German courtly romance of the eleventh century.⁴² Nevertheless, these texts do not offer the systematic description of body movement and gesture provided by Hugh that is so important to understanding performance techniques and their influence on the minstrels' perspective.

The impact of this moral theory on minstrel activity has two aspects. First, Hugh's normative guidelines encompass many aspects of proper conduct and general code of behaviour in daily life. Consequently his theory of gesture and the idea that the mind of a person is revealed by a person's body language became the basis for elegant comportment and symbolic gestures cultivated at the courts of nobles. The fundamental idea of discipline was certainly applicable to the goals of secular nobility because values of moderation, propriety, and lovely manners are equally applicable at court and monastery.⁴³ For example, Thomasin von Zerklare (fl. 1186–1236) who produced a conduct book for the education of courtiers took the obvious next step and applied Hugh's instructions and rationale. The second, and for our purposes more important implication is its influence on the court environment: no doubt the most important work environment of minstrels was the noble court, and the way in which noble courts received and evaluated entertainers seriously affected their financial and artistic success. Because the court forms the cultural context of minstrel activity, the theory as applied to courtly ideals prescribed for minstrels cultural parameters and rules that determined their actions both on and off stage.

Thomasin was a canon in Aquileia and wrote *Der Wälsche Gast* (1215–16) for the purpose of educating ladies and gentlemen at the German courts. In this book he covers self-discipline, the didactic use of romances, courtly love, and then each of the virtues: constancy, the good, strengths of the soul, moderation, and finally the avoidance of pride. Thomasin took much of his advice for young courtiers and ladies directly from Hugh. His guiding principles are moderation, discretion, and self-control achieved by training mind and body. Some of the admonitions are designed to teach graceful movement but all his guidelines try to inculcate courteous interaction with others, especially with women. To the young lady he urges restraint: to speak softly and infrequently, take small steps, keep her head and eyes still while riding, not to sit cross-legged, nor look behind her when she walks, nor look directly

⁴² C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness—Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals—939–1210* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), pp. 130–33.

⁴³ Bumke, 'Körper', p. 82.

at men she does not know. Young men and knights are admonished similarly to ride calmly, look at others with courtesy (i.e. not to stare), speak infrequently when superiors are present, keep hands still when they speak, and not touch other men in unseemly places; and they should not ask too many questions. Thomasin seems to have felt it necessary to express some astonishingly elementary rules in courtesy. He warns knights that when they ride with women they may not ride up to her tempestuously, should not startle her horse on purpose, and they must, by all means, avoid letting the horse urinate on her:

ein rîter sol niht vrevelfîch / zuo der vrouowen rîten; sicherlich,
 ein vrouwe erschraht hât dicke getân / den sprunc der bezzer waer verlân.
 swer sînem rosse des verhenget / daz ez eine vrowen besprenget,
 ich waene wol das sîn wîp / ouch âne meisterschaft belîp (ll. 425–31).

[A knight should never ride up to a lady violently, for a woman thus startled has surely performed many a jump that were better left undone. Any man who allows his horse such freedom that it sprays a lady, I quite imagine has a wife who lives without a master.]

In sum the ultimate goal is to achieve composure, and that is called *elegancia morum* or *schoene sitte* ('beautiful manners').⁴⁴ Thomasin cites Hugh in essence when he urges a congruence of content and form in one's actions:

Swâ ein vrouwe reht tuot, / ist ir gebaerde niht guot
 und ist ouch niht ir rede schône, / ir guot getât ist âne krône,
 wan schoene gebaerde und rede guot / die kroenent daz ein vrouwe tuot (ll. 199–204).

[Whenever a lady commits a kind and just act but does not comport herself with propriety and does not speak elegantly then her kindness remains uncrowned, for elegant conduct and proper speech crown all that a lady does.]

Although lady (*vrouwe*) is the subject here, the advice is applicable to all. Carrying out one's duty and executing good works has little value if they are not done with propriety and discipline. Good works then require elegant courtly manners and grace. As Hugh explains, '[...] each part [of the body] should fulfil its task with propriety and moderation lest it offend the eyes of the beholders with its lack of discipline'. (Chapter 12 quoted above) Thomasin's connection here between speech and action (rhetoric and gesture) is also in keeping with Hugh's explanation of discipline and harmony. As Bumke notes, 'Auch für die höfische Rede gilt, dass die Gebärden des Sprechers von höfischer *zuht* bestimmt werden'. (It also holds for courtly speech that the speaker's comportment and gestures are determined by courtly *discipline*).⁴⁵ Whether any of these instructions were followed by courtiers and to what extent is hard to ascertain, but they certainly had a reason to cultivate a

⁴⁴ Jaeger defines these terms as used in bishops' lives, *Courtliness*, p. 134.

⁴⁵ Bumke, 'Körper', p. 78.

code of behaviour like the one outlined by Hugh and Thomasin. A special code of comportment, protocol, and language visible to all aided the nobility to maintain class distinctions and privileges and to make a dignified showing in public.

Indeed, it is difficult to overestimate the significance of gesture in the medieval world. It was important because it compensated in many situations for the fact that most affairs and transactions were not committed to writing. Gesture, therefore, aided public memory. Words and gestures, often phrased as ‘hand and tongue’, were as often as not the primary means of making legal, public agreements. An oath taker would place the right hand on a potent object like the reliquary and speak the prescribed words. Such formal gestures fortified the spoken word and made it visible. Those who witnessed the legal act or oath also became the guarantors that the agreement would be kept.⁴⁶ Beyond the legal sphere, ritual gestures, especially in sacred context divided the population into lay and religious. In addition each group or social class had its own characteristic gestures: monks, knights, merchants, artisans, peasants, and certainly women all used gestures that typified their status, way of life, and gender. Minstrels however, had none. That is to say, according to the Church image, they were thought to exhibit excessive and lewd gesticulations. Nevertheless, they are yet again characterized by lack: they lacked gestures specific to their trade because they appropriated gestures from all spheres for their own artistic purposes. Thus all gestures available to society fed their performative vocabulary.⁴⁷

The implications of the social significance of gesture for minstrels are numerous. The rules laid out by Thomasin form the basis of court etiquette to the extent that they supplied a gauge by which to measure the moral conduct of all those in attendance at court, including those of servant or itinerant status like minstrels. Thus a court member’s familiarity with these guidelines would prompt him or her to judge a minstrel’s conduct and performance according to these criteria. But in a society that did not clearly demarcate its performance space from daily living space, minstrels themselves may not have always been able to take off their performance persona and be themselves. Secondly, it behoved the better performers to be intimate with courtly behavioural code because its language of gesture gave them their material. They used the inventory of courtly gestures with body movements and facial expressions to indicate the emotions of pleasure, fear, anger, love, and piety.

⁴⁶ For additional examples of gestures integrated with words, see Dobozy ‘Oral’, Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand, ‘Gebärdensprache’ and most recently Wenzel, ‘Die Stimme und die Schrift: Autoritätskonstitution im Medienwechsel von der Mündlichkeit zur Schriftlichkeit’, in *The Construction of Textual Authority in German Literature of the Medieval and Early Modern Periods*, ed. by James Poag (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 49–74.

⁴⁷ For more detail on the types of gesture according to trades, see Jean Claude Schmitt: ‘The Rationale of Gestures in the West: The Third to Thirteenth Centuries’, in *Cultural History of Gesture*, ed. by Bremmer, pp. 59–71.

By selectively applying this code, they could model proper courtly etiquette or violate it. Some courtly strictures consisted of not raising the hands above shoulder level, refraining from gesturing with the left hand, and restricting to men the pose of kneeling on one knee. Or minstrels could choose to use crude gestures like touching one's nose or mouth, or striking a clumsy stance to typify boorish peasants. The social code set parameters for minstrels defining what was too lewd or extreme to be shown before a courtly audience especially if women were present. But these parameters were not necessarily limiting because they provided the rules and cultural vocabulary in a set of signifiers that minstrels could mimic, mute, exaggerate or satirize.

Theory of conduct as represented by Hugh and Thomasin would shape to some extent each spectator's expectations for the performance of lyric and narrative poetry. The connection between poetry and minstrels is, of course, intimate. These guidelines inevitably found their way into literary texts and chronicles.⁴⁸ Much narrative poetry was composed by clerics. But even those texts composed by ministerials and minstrels were written in order to be morally instructive and to impart the ethical code of behaviour and speech to members of the courts, especially the knights. Furthermore, Jaeger has shown that 'romance does not mirror the chivalric values of feudal nobility, it creates them'.⁴⁹ And if romance and other narratives are models of courtliness and presented to court audience for the purpose of instruction and emulation, what kind of pressure did this place on the performers who sang or read them? Minstrels who could recite these texts in an exciting manner found themselves the mouthpieces of the clerics and other romancers who wished to please and edify. This cultural minstrel role must have favoured certain styles of performance.

For our study of medieval performance Hugh's theory and Thomasin's application are, therefore, doubly significant. First of all they together guide both lay and ecclesiastical conduct. In the section on the performer's body and technique, I explored the most basic level of gesture and physical movement. Secondly they allow us to go beyond this elementary level of movement and technique to the next level of cultural-historical context and genre. Thomasin provides us with a general sense of the social code of gestures and some evidence of the cultural parameters framing the ideals of courtliness. Since minstrels travelled but worked often at secular courts, they had to be completely attuned to the cultural codes of behaviour that are specific to each culture, geographic area, social group and religious ritual. In addition they needed to be thoroughly familiar with the gestural and vocal code with which they delighted their spectators. It was at this level that individual performers would succeed or fail. It is also at this second level that we can delve into the processes and transformations in consciousness a performer undergoes as she or he

⁴⁸ Bumke, 'Körper', p. 78.

⁴⁹ Jaeger, *Courtliness*, pp. 209, 230.

applies techniques to the gestural code to construct a pose, present personas, and move in and out of roles. These transformations of role-playing bring about a performance consciousness or transportation that is as essential to successful performance as it is unacceptable to society.

Liminality and Endangered Identity

The performer's success depends on impersonation, on his being able to represent different personas. But what happens when the entertainer and audience experience the doubling of identity during the scenic event? These multiple states of representation—being himself, and a stage persona, and simultaneously assuming the voice of narrator or persona of a song—were recognized then as now. Nevertheless, it put the minstrel's identity into question. Contemporary stage directors like Schechner, Barba, and Grotowski focus primarily on dramatic representations that often begin using a text and normally work with actors who usually play one or more characters. These contemporary performers carry proper names and, therefore, individual identities outside of the scenic event, whereas the distinction between the roles minstrels played is not so easily determined. These directors, because of their involvement with avant-garde and experimental theatre, made discoveries about the liminality of the modern actor during performance that apply here. They discovered a vast range of tensions between the performer's ordinary identity and the roles he plays. The range extends from the one extreme in which the performer's identity merges completely with the role itself to a complete separation where the performer and the audience know that the actor and the role are two identities or two realities sharing the same time and space.⁵⁰

Medieval entertainers no doubt exercised the many options between these extremes. Only in Euro-American theatre do we find acting in which the identity of the performer as separate from the character is intended to be imperceptible. In other genres and styles the performer can also assume a stage persona and a character role, but he flaunts the gap between identities and reminds the audience of the distinction. Contemporary experimental theatre has been inspired by the variety of genres found in other cultures, and these insights open up new ways of thinking about medieval performance possibilities. Richard Schechner explains that in the thousand-year Indian tradition of Kutiyattam it is expected that the performer transform himself into a number of different characters even within a single scene. Hence a role in Kutiyattam is defined as what one performer does during a performance whereas mainstream Euro-American theatre equates a role with a character.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Schechner, *Essays*, p. 17.

⁵¹ Schechner, *Between*, pp. 230–31.

In effect, the performance persona of a medieval entertainer may have been composed partly of his own self, and he may even have been able to remain in this persona in public. In addition to the stage persona, and depending on the genre, he could assume the role of the narrator in romance or switch between the voices of narrator and characters within any narrative, or assume the first person voice in a song. None of these roles need be totally identical to the stage persona. As he oscillated he alternatively lost one identity and gained another. In so doing, he turned himself into a completely liminal being because the indeterminacy thus created deprived him of a fixed, personal identity. As Schechner clarifies, 'It isn't that a performer stops being himself or herself when he becomes another—multiple selves co-exist in an unresolved dialectical tension'.⁵² This dialectical co-existence of multiple identities influences the performer's consciousness during rehearsal and the performative event, but may also have long-term effects. Erik Christofferson explains that contemporary performers, 'can be "swallowed up" by their craft, lose their ability to move in and out of a role and that particular form of behaviour which is characteristic of the theatre process. They thereby lose the ability to turn otherness on and off'.⁵³

Many members of the larger and wealthier courts in Germany saw enough secular scenic events to make them sophisticated spectators. We know this because they appreciated the complex intertextuality of *Minnesang*. According to medieval descriptions of performances we know that hardly any effort was made to hide the 'as if' situation of secular performance. As a result the experienced spectators realized that the performer was moving in and out of roles during performance and that he could assume several roles during a single scenic event. They knew the minstrel was not himself because he was projecting a persona or a posture and was also not not-himself at the same time. That is, the performer did not completely turn into another character. Like any modern performer in experimental theatre, he had to be adept at moving back and forth between roles, identities and genres.

Genres in which many roles are played by one person require extreme versatility.⁵⁴ Lyric genres like the *Wechsel* ('dialogue') in *Minnesang* as well as many narrative texts prove that this type of role switching within even a single, short song was common. Medieval entertainers needed to be versatile in this way also

⁵² Schechner, *Between*, p. 6.

⁵³ Erik Christoffersen, *The Actor's Way*, trans. by Richard Fowler (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 4. Schechner explains the influence of role-playing on the actor's quotidian personality in a bit more detail: 'One is never sure how much the "star personality" is genuine, and how much put on. The star is usually not sure either. A stereotyped mask thickens and freezes—this mask is worn publicly and privately throughout life', *Performance*, p. 50.

⁵⁴ Schechner makes clear that switching between roles is an arduous process: 'But it's not only Euro-American modern theatre that demands of its performers extraordinary flexibility. There are many genres that emphasize storytelling—with the narrator enacting many roles, even animals, stones, and weapons', *Between*, p. 230.

because the demand for variety in performance genres must have been high. French and German narratives and gnomic poetry tell us that performers were expected to perform works requested by their audience. The ease or difficulty of access to entertainment also placed demands on performers. Even though performers appear to have been plentiful at great court feasts, we do not know how many entertainers were available at smaller courts on a regular basis or during the cold months of the year when travel was more difficult. If performers were infrequent visitors, they would have been asked to provide a variety of entertainments. What kind of performer was successful under these circumstances, and what level of artistic achievement the audience expected, we cannot know. But we can well imagine that on occasion their hare-like jumping back and forth between identities made them lose their own.

Consequently the living performer, then as now, is liminal in nature because he traverses the threshold between the 'as if' world of the stage and the real world. He loses personal identity when he performs one or more roles, or switches between several voices in song. This slippery existence of minstrels made medieval churchmen nervous. Liminality then likely stands at the core of the pariah image so often reiterated in the ecclesiastical record and remarks of theologians. If we apply Hugh of St Victor's clearly articulated moral theory to judge minstrels—as spectators would—their actions and their liminality confirm their pariah status. Hugh's complaint is that performers, when they compose their luxury movement in a scenic event, present a role, a pose. Performance, then, is artifice, whereas Hugh's description of a virtuous life demands a one to one correspondence or identity between inner virtue and external comportment and behaviour. Minstrels in performance mode must break down this kind of identity, take on a persona or role, and pretend to be what they are not. Thus it is not surprising that sometimes charges of liminality and transgression, and even supernatural connections were founded on actual observations as spectators watched minstrels change personas before their eyes. Some moralists found the posturing and indeterminacy of performers justification enough to consider minstrels agents of the devil. It was their way of dealing with liminality. Commonly held beliefs in the devil's active involvement in daily life offered ready justification to demonize minstrels. Propagated by churchmen, stories of complicity with the devil were plentiful, and their argument was simple: when minstrels deviate from the social norms and conventions that reinforce identity, they move away from the Christian community and, therefore, away from God. The argument demonizing minstrels rests at the core of religious Christian dualist thinking that requires the existence of both God and Satan.⁵⁵ Satan, the ever-present seducer, represents the dangerous or negative aspect of the sacred.

⁵⁵ Jeffrey Russell speaks of quasi-dualism in Christianity, and notes specifically the fact that the devil is not a separate entity (as required in a strict dualism), but created by God and subordinate to him, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 185.

He does not undermine God's power but reinforces it. By always acting against it, he demonstrates how strong it is. Once performers are accused of turning away from God, the logical consequence is that they are thought to participate in a menacing satanic alliance.⁵⁶ As servants of the devil, they had to be labelled and banned. From this type of accusation springs the alarm that underlies the opprobrium of authors like Honorius Augustodunensis and Berthold of Regensburg.

Honorius Augustodunensis, (c. 1170) is part of a general discussion beginning in the twelfth century that bestows an increasingly positive value on the temporal world in general, and secular activities in particular. Along with the rehabilitation of the body, attempts were made to assign to occupations, classes and 'types of existence' a place in the value system.⁵⁷ Honorius mapped out a moral classification in which trades express social and moral value in terms of what they produce. The issue of secular trades also concerned Peter the Chanter and his followers who, when they modernized the penitentials, added the category of trades and income to the criteria used to determine penance.⁵⁸ Honorius is thus one voice among many who integrates daily secular life and work into the Christian salvation plan. Honorius's text, *Elucidarium*, written in the pupil-teacher question and answer format appropriate for teaching dogma, lists the trades and offices, and assesses them according to their proximity to salvation. When he comes to performers, he proclaims they are guilty of allying themselves with demonic forces. Although the first part of his statement, that minstrels have no hope of reaching heaven, is quoted in every study of minstrels, the master's answer is rarely quoted in its entirety nor dealt with in its immediate context. And without this context, we cannot place Honorius's statements within the discussion of trades and minstrel status nor comprehend the full extent of the perceptions and arguments that were applied to stigmatize minstrels.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ The alliance of devil and minstrel, because it is presented as an intentional act, implies a pact. The idea of a devil's pact was very popular in the Middle Ages. In the legend of Theophilus of Cilicia, for example, the story says he promised to serve the devil and did exactly what minstrels are said to do: relinquish fealty to God, lose free will, and accept evil and vices such as pride and lust in return for earthly gain, Russell, p. 82.

⁵⁷ Irmela von der Lühe, Werner Röske, 'Ständekritische Predigt des Spätmittelalters an Beispiel Bertholds von Regensburg', in *Literatur im Feudalismus*, ed. by Dieter Richter, Literaturwissenschaft und Sozialwissenschaften, 5 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1975), pp. 64–65.

⁵⁸ Jacques Le Goff finds in the confessors' manuals a theology of work that no longer considers labour to be totally negative. Baldwin lists the categories guiding the confessor that established at this time that included freedom or servitude, social rank or prestige, and trade. Honorius's study of trades was followed in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century by many others in which the occupation of minstrel continued to be considered morally dangerous. See Jacques Le Goff, *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 110–11, 56–59.

⁵⁹ For centuries before Honorius, minstrels had already been designated in the Church record as the cultural boundary markers of Christianity. In his text with the heading of

In Honorius's list of trades or types of existence, the minstrel marks the nadir. In the first group the degree of eligibility or ineligibility for salvation is dependent on the occupation of a person. The passage proceeds in descending order from prelates and monks to knights, and merchants with decreasing possibility of salvation and finally to minstrels who occupy the most forsaken position of all because they have no hope. Next, following the pivotally placed minstrels, those with increasing chances of salvation line up in ascending order. These groups are no longer by trades; they are, instead, all characterized by degrees of inner purity and beatific simplicity. Moving from peasants, the mentally incapacitated to children (the innocents), we find that all are mental conditions or life-situations in which trade or occupation matters little. Placement of minstrels in the middle, at the pivotal point between occupations and these life-situations is telling since it places performers on the threshold.⁶⁰ Thus Honorius demonstrates in his schema the pariah status assigned to performers by the Church.

Although Honorius endeavoured to incorporate trades into Christian salvation ethic, if only to point out how difficult it is to be saved, it remains unclear whether he viewed minstrelsy as a profession or trade, or a way of life dictated by status and class, or condition of birth or life-situation like peasants or fools. His placement reflects the fact that some aspects of the Church's minstrel symbol have their basis in the performer's liminality or loss of identity. Honorius presents here in clearly structured form the well-developed product of theologians and, unlike other moralists, inserts almost no personal interpretation. For he does not fail to give a theological justification for the minstrels' ineligibility for salvation when he offers the reader what he presents as their own rejection of Christianity:

'Habent spem joculariores?': M. 'Nullam: tota namque intentione sunt ministri Satanae, de his dicitur: 'Deum non cognoverunt; ideo Deus sprexit eos, et Dominus subsannabit eos', quia derisores deridentur'.⁶¹

'dogmatica et ascetica', Honorius did not present personal opinion as Christopher Page has claimed: 'When Honorius Augustodunensis decided that the Master in his colloquy should deny minstrels *all* hope of salvation, he created the most famous of all medieval references to minstrelsy' (italics in original), *The Owl and the Nightingale: Musical Life and Ideas in France 1100–1300* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 8. Honorius could not have 'decided' to cut minstrels off from salvation: He is reiterating a narrow but long-standing reading of official writ. His text lays out a rigid dualism that separates right from wrong, the saved from the damned and allows for no grey areas.

⁶⁰ See Schreier-Hornung who finds in this text an analysis of society, pp. 77–80 and alternatively, Aron Gurevich who finds the list of trades rather unsystematic and points out that Honorius is not concerned with a social analysis but outlines what manner of life favours salvation of the soul, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*, trans. by János M. Bak and Paul A. Hollingsworth, Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture, 14 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 154–58.

⁶¹ *Elucidarium* II, Chapter 18, PL 172, col. 1148.

[‘Do minstrels have any hope?’: M. ‘None: for all are by choice ministers of Satan; of them it is said: ‘They do not know God, therefore, God despises them, and the Lord will mock them’ (Psalm 2. 4) because those who mock shall be mocked in return.’]

Honorius is bitterly earnest in his denunciation of performers. Persuasive force is achieved with accusations that minstrels as a group are not in a position to disprove—they lack faith. This is an old but serious charge. Honorius spells out here the connection implied in the ecclesiastical record noted above (Chapter 2) when they are listed with heretics.⁶² Honorius claims minstrels sin far more grievously than heretics, for they have *actively* rejected God in order to become servants of the devil. He thus places them squarely on the border of Christianity, connects them with illicit activity and then condemns them utterly for concerted opposition to God and Christianity. Because they are said to serve by choice and live in active revolt, like Satan, their sin is apostasy and so they are considered to pose a serious threat to their audiences. As servants of the devil minstrels stand with one foot in hell, but as itinerants they stand with the other firmly planted in everyone’s door: in hovels, taverns, dance halls, manor houses, and courts.

The abhorrence and disgust with which some moralists like Honorius mention minstrels is, therefore, not surprising if what they write truly invokes the pariah symbol as defined in theological terms. The problem with any evidence from Honorius and other clerical writers on minstrels is that they treated them collectively while the reality is that minstrels did not exist as a uniform group. In agreement with the moral framework presented by Hugh, Honorius implies that the liminality of the minstrel fuels the charge of apostasy against him. Yet at the core of the concept we also find the liminality of the real performer. Although the real lives of minstrels and their actual scenic presentations are seldom described, performance theory confirms that for the theologians and moralists, performance techniques and the liminality of the minstrel only reinforced the prevailing negative image of the minstrel. Performance techniques required performers to move outside the bounds of moral propriety and standards. Moreover they used that boundary for their performances, to turn the quotidian event into an extra-ordinary one. But even so, minstrels were not totally responsible for their demonization. Their image resulted from two major sources. First, it was their own flexibility, liminality, and therefore, their lack of social and moral identity that labelled them deceitful. Secondly, the premise that God and Satan are fully and directly involved in the quotidian affairs of all people equated the loss of stable identity or multiplication of identities with a movement away from God. And that necessarily makes them lackeys and mercenaries of the devil. The idea that performers collaborate with the devil took root particularly

⁶² An old tradition has it that heretics were, at least unwittingly, servants of the devil and part of his mystical body, Russell, p. 190. Some of the Church synods had also classed them with heretics for their unwillingness to join the Christian community. See Chapter 2 above.

tenaciously in popular consciousness, and Honorius was building on this fact. Clearly, the performers themselves did not share this view.

Once Honorius has connected minstrels with the devil, we must consider the spread of this idea and its consequences for the perception of performers among the general populace. In the mid-thirteenth century, Berthold von Regensburg (1210–1272), one of the most popular preachers in Germany, could assume these ideas were common among his listeners. Berthold stood in the tradition of the Franciscans who went out to preach to the lay population. Their preaching goals and strategies, specifically designed to attract a large group of listeners in public spaces, define them as performers. In order to be successful they had to base their delivery on the four principles outlined by Eugenio Barba. The goal of assembling a large audience is also a reminder that the manner of delivery is just as important as the content of a sermon. And Berthold's success means that he adopted bodily performing techniques in addition to his rhetorical strategies as had all his successful predecessors, and that his techniques and mendicant lifestyle placed him in close proximity to the activities and lives of minstrels.

Berthold's sermons, delivered regularly to large crowds, are also an excellent example of the type of content preachers disseminated to the population at large.⁶³ In contrast to most of the Church writers discussed thus far, Berthold was emphatically concerned about lay morality and conduct in the day-to-day activities of the general German speaking population. His concern stems clearly from the charge given the mendicant orders to reach out to and educate the lay public.⁶⁴ In a manner similar to Honorius, Berthold laid out a new connection between minstrels and the devil in

⁶³ The German sermons attributed to Berthold von Regensburg are not considered to have been composed by him. Nevertheless, my analysis holds no matter who may have delivered this sermon because Berthold is simply the most famous of many Franciscan preachers. The texts themselves are clearly intended to be understood by a general, uneducated audience and had to be presented to that audience in a theatrically intense manner. On Berthold's life and sermons see 'Berthold von Regensburg', *VL*, vol. 1, col. 817–23, and Georg Steer, 'Leben und Wirken des Berthold von Regensburg', in *800 Jahre Franz von Assisi: Franziskanische Kunst und Kultur des Mittelalters*, ed. by Harry Kühnel, Katalog der Ausstellung Krems–Stein (Vienna: Amt des niederösterreichischen Landesmuseums, 1982), pp. 169–75.

⁶⁴ Kästner has shown that until the council of Lateran IV in 1225 the clergy had not attended to the instruction of the laity. The mendicants took on this responsibility and as a result came into competition with the poet-singers: "Sermo Vulgaris" oder "Hövischer Sanc". Der Wettstreit zwischen Mendikantenpredigern und Wanderdichtern um die Gunst des Laienpublikums und seine Folgen für die mittelhochdeutsche Sangspruchdichtung des 13. Jahrhunderts (Am Beispiel Bertholds von Regensburg und Friedrichs von Sonnenburg)', in *Wechselspiele. Kommunikationsformen und Gattungsinterferenzen mittelhochdeutscher Lyrik*, ed. by Michael Schilling and Peter Strohschneider (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 1996), pp. 209–43.

rather elaborate detail in an illustrative sermon on the Ten Orders of Angels and Christendom (Sermon 10).⁶⁵

According to Sermon 10, the faithful make up nine choirs, but the tenth is composed of those who rejected God. These are the minstrels. Berthold defines them first as those who accept material goods in exchange for reputation (*guot für êre nemen*) which is the common, often pejoratively intended phrase designating performers.⁶⁶ Having turned away from God like the devil himself, the minstrels now serve him. Berthold claims that whatever the devil puts into their mouths, they are willing to repeat; they malign the virtuous and praise the wicked. As Berthold denounces all entertainers, he warns that those who sin by supporting them will not go unpunished for they must answer to God on Judgement Day:

er almechtige got helfe mir der gnâden, daz dise niun koere behalten werden; wan der zehende kôr ist eht gar von uns gevallen und aptrûnnic worden. Daz sint die gumpelliute, gîger unde tambûrer, swie die geheizen sîn, alle die guot für êre nemen. Sie solten den zehenden kôr geordent haben: nû sint sie uns aptrûnnic worden mit ir trûgenheit. Wan er ret eime daz beste, daz er kan die wîle daz erz hoeret, und als er im den rûcken kêret, sô ret er im das boeste, daz er iemer mê kan oder mac, unde schiltet manigen, der gote ein gerechter man ist und auch der werlte, unde lobet einen, der gote unde der werlte schedelîchen lebet. Wan allez ir leben habent sie niwan nâch sünden unde nâch schanden gerihtet unde schament sich deheiner sünden noch schanden. Unde daz den tiuvel versmâhet ze reden daz redest dû, und allez daz der tiuvel in dich geschûtten mac, daz laezest dû allez vallen ûz dînem munde. Owê, daz ie dehein touf ûf dich quam! wie dû des toufes unde des kristentuomes verloukent hâst! Und allez daz man dir gît, daz gît man dir mit sünden; wan sie müezent gote dar umbe antwürten an dem jungesten tage die dir gebent. Alsô gît man dirz mit sünden, und alsô enpfæhest dû ez mit sünden und ouch mit schanden. Wol hin, ob dû iendert hie bist! wan dû bist uns abtrûnnic worden mit schalkeit unde mit leckerie, unde dâ von solt dû ze dînen genôzen, den aptrûnnigen tiuveln, wan dû heizest nâch den tiuveln unde bist halt nâch in genennet.⁶⁷

[May almighty God help me in his mercy, that these nine choirs be sustained for the tenth choir is truly and entirely fallen from among us and become apostate. These are the jugglers, fiddlers, and tambourine players, whatever they are called, all those who

⁶⁵ The discussion of the ten trades (*officia*) is based on Latin theology texts concerning the theory of trades (*Ständelehre*). According to von der Lûhe and Rôcke, the reception of this material in Germany begins with Berthold, p. 48. His source for a hierarchy of nine choirs of angels and Christians is likely the Celestial and Ecclesiastical Hierarchy of Pseudo-Dionysius, see Andrew Louth's translation, *Denys the Areopagite* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1989).

⁶⁶ See Chapter 6 below on the polemical uses of this phrase by poets in romance and gnomic poetry.

⁶⁷ Berthold von Regensburg, *Vollständige Ausgabe seiner Predigten mit Anmerkungen*. Franz Pfeiffer, ed. by Joseph Strobl, 2 vols (1862; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965), vol. 1, p. 155.

exchange reputation for material goods. They should have made up the tenth choir. Now they have become apostate with their falsehood. For he speaks the best he can of a person so long as he hears it, and as soon as that person turns his back, he speaks the most evil words he knows or can say; and he criticizes many a one who is righteous before God and the world, and praises another who lives a life harmful to God and world. For all of their lives they have turned toward nothing but sin and disgrace and feel no shame for any sin or disgrace. And whatever the devil finds demeaning to say, that you say, and all that the devil can pour into you, you let fall out of your mouth. Woe that baptism was ever given to you! How you have denied baptism and Christianity! And everything people might give you, they give you in sin, for they who give it to you will have to answer to God in the Last Judgement. Thus one gives to you in sin, and you receive it in sin and also in disgrace. Better you go anywhere but here! For you have apostatized yourself from us with treachery and lasciviousness, and therefore, you should go to your comrades the apostate devils, because you are named after the devils and even have their reputation.]

A suggestion of a pact with the devil can be read into Honorius's text as we have seen, but here in Berthold's sermon the servitude of minstrels is explicit.⁶⁸ Because they serve the devil, they are guilty of false praise, calumny, and deception. In Hugh of St Victor's terms these traits are a result of their failure to establish a constant identity. When minstrels praise the wicked and disgrace the good, they perform the exact opposite, that is, a perversion of Christian deeds. Their single sin—and it is the worst sin possible—is denial of God and Christianity (*verlouken*). By rejecting Christianity, they are like the fallen angels, and apostasy is their way of life.

This accusation is consistent with Christian dualism that also paints non-Christians as the antithesis of Christians. This dualism also requires those parallel traits that allow the opposition thus set up to be logically valid. Thus it follows that the opposite of Christian civilization cannot be total chaos—it must have an inverted order and regularity. Minstrels are wicked only to the extent that they exist on the edge of the Christian realm. Within their own realm they exhibit the expected virtues of devotion to their lord, and adhere to norms dictated by sin. For Berthold, too, this means that the devil's world is a necessary foil to the good. Berthold thus castigates minstrels for their constant interference with the Christian world and for their unstinting industry in the task of tempting people to do evil.

Halfway through this passage Berthold shifts from the third person pronouns (*si* and *er*) to address his audience with the singular *du* as is typical of the oral medium. Used to address each of the listeners directly, the pronoun makes each individual reflect earnestly on the message, because it seems to be meant personally for him or her. But to whom is he speaking? Could this portion of the sermon actually be meant for minstrels? Not likely, since minstrels would have made up a very small portion

⁶⁸ In Germany minstrels are frequently demonized in sermons. Schubert has several examples, pp. 116–17 as does Kästner, 'Sermo', pp. 224–25. In contrast, Page has not found such demonization in his French and English sources, *Owl*, pp. 8–15.

of the population and, therefore, the listeners; and he already made clear that they have no hope of salvation. Moreover, Berthold typically turns a very specific trait or category into a metaphor in his sermons. For these reasons it is more likely that even in a popular, vernacular sermon addressed to all listeners, the terms for performers were intended and understood as the symbol of apostasy and were, therefore, applicable to anyone who persisted in wickedness.

The intended audience and, therefore, the significance of direct address in this passage can only be explained by examining the entire sermon. The structure is given by the ten choirs that are reviewed in sequence beginning with the highest order of classes or trades: the prelates, priests and nobility in the first three, then the artisans in the next six, and finally, the tenth order or rank located at the edge of Christendom constitutes those who reject Christianity. As he discusses each group, he first defines the office or trade referring to the group in third person. Next he describes the duties using second person plural pronoun *ir* to give specific examples and general instructions as to what the members should do. And finally, when he switches to *du*, he singles out individuals and shifts the emphasis from duties one must perform to individual instances of alternatives in practice. This implies a choice on the part of the artisan and illustrates the individual's obligations to the group because the choice is always between proper and improper acts. In each case, there is a temptation to gain financially from duplicity. At this point Berthold shifts to singular *du* pointing his finger at the listener. He warns that if 'you', the listener, choose a particular action, then 'you' are not fulfilling 'your' work properly and honestly and, therefore, you deceive: *Sô bist dû ein trügener*.⁶⁹ Next he gives examples of fraudulent practices and their consequences. Each misdemeanour listed he then identifies as a breach of good faith (*trügenheit*). Finally he declares that all those who deceive in their work are apostate (*abtrünnic*). This tripartite structure and the terms for deception run through the entire sermon like a *leitmotif*.

Examples of fraudulent practices in the market place include using incorrect measures and weights, and cooking and serving old fish to restaurant guests. Irmela von der Lühe and Werner Röcke find in this sermon the germ of a work ethic according to which Berthold offers guidance for the management of guilds and confraternities. Guild members are supposed to be as much concerned with the moral standards of their profession as they are about its economic and legal status.⁷⁰ With respect to minstrels however, Berthold would not have intended these guidelines to apply to the confraternities of performers because the group he refers to belongs to an entirely different category—the tenth choir—and he considered their entire work to consist solely of intending to deceive. In this final portion of the sermon Berthold makes clear to his listeners how easily each of them, regardless of their trade, can be tempted into fraud and fall into apostasy. The sermon thus culminates with the tenth

⁶⁹ Berthold, p. 147.

⁷⁰ Von der Lühe, p. 65.

choir of minstrels who are intended as the cautionary example to deter the listeners from transgressing.

Upon turning his attention to minstrels, Berthold abandons the tripartite structure used in dealing with the previous trades. This group is categorically different. The sermon does not culminate as expected in a final type of trade that can be defined as earlier groups were. As with Honorius's classification, here too the structure is broken. Berthold cannot delineate the proper duties of minstrels. He can only characterize them in general terms as sinners, parasites, flatterers and deceivers and dwell at length on their apostasy. Their entire existence is based on false words and deeds. The heightened tension created by the increasing frequency of *trügenheit*, *abtrünnic*, *untruwe* throughout the sermon impresses upon the listener the escalating possibility of sin, apostasy and unrestorable loss of grace by individual members of each group. Repetition of the *leitmotif* builds tension to produce a scathing denunciation of the arch-apostate—the minstrel. When Berthold switches from plural *sie* to singular *du*, the sermon reaches a climax as he gives potential sinners a fierce tongue-lashing for their apostasy. The *du* allows him to break down for the listeners the barrier between vague possibility and imminent likelihood. Instead of imparting to his flock a vague sense that one of them may possibly sin in the future, he forces them by using the singular pronoun to realize that each of them must fear an imminent and irreversible fall from grace by means of a fraudulent act or word. The minstrel thus comes to signify the potential apostate in every one of us. Berthold holds him up in a final warning and alarm signal to all listeners.

Read in this way, the second person singular pronoun structures the text and emphasizes the message that anyone in Berthold's audience who plays false with the Christian community could become a 'minstrel'. The tension between the symbol that could apply to anyone and the specific *du* form of address exposes the minstrel's ambivalent nature. Any of the listeners, even a neighbour or a friend could be unmasked as a 'minstrel' and apostate. The insecurity caused by not knowing to whom the *du* refers is important here since fear of the devil was an integral part of popular belief. If Berthold had intended to single out and address only certain people, he would have been more specific with his terms. He does not dwell on any precise terms for entertainers and makes it clear that what they are called is unimportant: *gumpeliute*, *gyger und tamburer*, *swie die geheissen sint* (jugglers, fiddlers, and tambourine players, and whatever they are called). He is interested in general behaviour and uses entertainers as a symbol to indicate that he is talking about those who have seceded from Christianity. And for them he has nothing but contempt.

As Berthold remonstrates against minstrels and begins to call them devilish names, the growing intensity of his vituperative indicates there is more at stake than in the previous sections of the sermon: Berthold appears to be in serious competition with minstrels. The tension in the tone and vehemence of Berthold's language hints that the mendicant order and minstrelsy are in such rivalry because they have analogous functions. Clearly, minstrels and preachers are on different sides of the

fence. Entertainers, so the claim, are apostate and accomplish the devil's will on earth. Friars on the other hand are God's servants on earth. If the devil is a negative counterpart to God, then it follows that the servants of the devil, namely the minstrels, are the negative earthly counterpart to the mendicants. This association of minstrels with the devil is just one symptom of a serious conflict between mendicants and performers.

In Sermon 10 Berthold elaborates on this theological framework of good and evil at the very beginning when he outlines the duties of priests: to teach the faithful, to gather them together for sacred worship, and to identify and absolve their sins. Minstrels, on the other hand, distract people from the sacred and tempt them to frivolous or immoral actions. The activities attributed to them support the devil's work which consists of gambling, gossip, calumny, disrupting divine service, and impersonating good, reputable people.⁷¹ If minstrels pull people away from sacred service (which is what the devil does) and some people believed they do this by means of their secular performance, then they are clearly rivals of the clergy. To the extent that preachers and minstrels (poet-singers in particular) both use the vernacular and compete for the attention of the public, then performers are in conflict with priests and especially itinerant preachers. Phrased another way, the implied role of the clergy is to foil the 'devil's (= minstrel's) designs. This conflict also demonstrates that itinerant preachers and performers are competing for audiences first and for their moneybags second. Gifts and payments to minstrels siphoned off money that otherwise would have been given to the mendicants.⁷²

Hannes Kästner has demonstrated in great detail the basis for this serious competition. Before the mendicant orders were established, the poet-singers had a monopoly in providing information, moral guidance, and entertainment to the lay public. They did this by means of their gnomic songs, news stories, hagiographic narratives, courtly tales, and dance songs. In return they requested a gift, often used clothing. But once the mendicants began preaching, the two wayfaring groups found themselves in direct competition for audiences, performance space at court and in town, and also alms, including clothing. As a result mendicants like Berthold von Regensburg began a defamatory campaign against the poet-singers.⁷³

⁷¹ Russell, p. 73.

⁷² See Kästner's discussion of clerics at court who competed with minstrels. In 'Sermo' he cites Meissner who complains about mendicants accepting gifts of clothing they really cannot use '*waz sol münichen wertlich gewant?*', pp. 237–38. He also offers the positive example of Tantris (alias Tristan) replacing the chaplain as tutor to Isolde in *Harfe und Schwert. Der höfische Spielmann bei Gottfried von Straßburg* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1981), pp. 23–27, and along the same lines, see Schreier-Hornung, p. 187.

⁷³ Kästner, p. 220. In Sermon x the minstrel addressee is multivalent, but in other sermons containing additional invectives, they are more clearly aimed against minstrels, Kästner pp. 230–32. In English sources, however, minstrels are not in competition with preachers, but rather, are associated with them in anti-fraternal texts that accuse both of *turpiloquio*. The

My interpretation of a deep-seated rivalry between clergy and performers in just this single sermon gains an additional, performative dimension if we focus on Berthold's only specific complaint against minstrels. It has to do with speech. He charges performers (most likely poet-singers) with deceit, calumny, and with such *turpiloquium* as even the devil does not participate in. As he berates them for abuse of language, he sets up a contrast between his mission to spread God's word and theirs to distort it. If minstrels impersonate or present a persona, one cannot determine who they are. Thus the fraud minstrels perpetrate is in their own identity: they deceive with their words and performance so that no one can identify them. But if a certain amount of role-playing is also undertaken by priests in their preaching or even in the liturgy, then they are inevitably using the same strategies, but claim they are doing it for different purposes.

As a very successful and effective itinerant preacher, Berthold von Regensburg knew the power of speech and the bodily movement that gave it visibility and authority. He was clearly well schooled in delivering sermons. We know some of his sermons, and of his oratory success in attracting and holding an audience, so we may assume that he used at least some of the same fundamental techniques of voice and gesture outlined by theatre anthropology and augmented them by culture-specific elements appropriate to his topic and listeners. Although we don't know much about his readings, he was doubtless in a position to have read Hugh of St Victor, Geoffrey of Vinsauf's rhetorical manual, *Poetria nova* (c. 1200), as well as a number of sermon manuals.⁷⁴ Thus as Berthold gathered experience, he must have assumed a performing body and adapted some additional performance strategies of contemporary minstrels. Of course, we cannot know his techniques or style, but manuals of preaching prevalent from the beginning of the thirteenth century on teach that the three components of delivery—voice, facial expression, and gesture—receive equal emphasis. Performance theory recognizes that the delivery of a sermon is a performance event that also requires the preacher to develop his own stage persona. In the process (or rush) of delivery he too may experience the liminality of being at once himself and yet also beside himself. The mendicant preachers had to have been conscious of the special nature of the performative process, even if they did not articulate it. This process is what made their sermons convincing. And because Berthold went on tour just as minstrels did, often speaking in open fields or town squares to relatively spontaneous audiences, he had to project bigger than life movements and voice so that people could see and hear him, but even more

itinerant habit appears to be a determining reason for their low status. See Penn R. Szittya, *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 251–57.

⁷⁴ Geoffrey states the three constituents of rhetorical delivery: the speaker's mouth, facial expression, and gesture, Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poetria nova*, trans. by Margaret Nims (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1967), Chapter 6. For additional information on the topic of gesture in sermon manuals, see Schmitt, *Raison*, p. 283.

importantly, so that they would be moved by the sermon. In these public spaces he was certainly likely to find himself in competition with performers.⁷⁵ Small wonder he so vehemently condemned minstrels by formulating an analogy between his salvation work as a servant of God and the harm minstrels do in serving the devil. Hence theatricality became so much a part of sermon delivery that minstrels became at once a model to be emulated and a competitor to be eliminated.⁷⁶

If such competition with performers and proximity to performance practice were felt keenly enough, it would also explain partially at least the enduring rhetorical impact of the minstrel symbol, and also account for the facility with which indiscretions of the clergy were expressed in terms of minstrel activity. Judging from the polemics, the rivalry was indeed felt keenly and preachers worked to discredit minstrelsy in all its forms before the public. In response, the poet-singers did not remain silent. They answered point for point Berthold's accusations and reversed the argument. As an example of the poet-singer's stance, Kästner offers Song 67 by Friedrich von Sonnenburg (fl. 1250–75). Here Friedrich explains that those who condemn giving to minstrels receive their words from the devil. He praises his fellow poet-singers using the aesthetic argument that art brings joy and serves God, then he states vehemently that performers live like all other Christians: they hate disloyalty and injustice, strive for salvation, repent their sins, and take communion.⁷⁷

In addition to Kästner's outline of the causes of the competition and polemics, I find here an even more fundamental conflict based on performance practice and the ideals of comportment set down by Hugh of St Victor. As servants of the devil, minstrels had to be circumscribed, banned, and stigmatized with infamy. Basically, this is one way in which many dealt with a liminal figure who changed personas and, therefore, could not be defined in society's terms. As we have seen, the body movements all performers use to create a dynamic public presence cost them their

⁷⁵ Kästner, 'Sermo', p. 226.

⁷⁶ Schmitt, *Raison*, p. 281, and Kästner, 'Sermo' p. 229 both confirm this. An analogous situation exists with the inculcation of the ideals of courtly behaviour at secular courts. Michael Curschmann and Stephen Jaeger have both amply demonstrated using different literary examples, that the clergy usurped the stories of minstrels (*Nibelungelied* in one case) and reworked them into literary texts to be read to courtly audiences as models of behaviour and 'instruments of correction'. Jaeger, *Courtliness*, pp. 231–33, and Michael Curschmann, 'Nibelungenlied und Nibelungenklage, Über Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit im Prozess der Episierung', in *Deutsche Literatur im Mittelalter—Kontakte und Perspektiven*. Hugo Kuhn zum Gedenken, ed. by Christoph Cormeau (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1979), pp. 85–119.

⁷⁷ Kästner, 'Sermo', pp. 232–35. The only problem with Friedrich's poems is that they never explicitly name the group attacked. To establish that the singers' polemic is directed against the mendicants several more explicit songs by Marner, Meissner, and Frauenlob (*schant iuch, minner orden*, 'shame on you, mendicant order' are cited by Kästner, 'Sermo', pp. 235–37. These and other poets involved in the polemic are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 below.

respectability because these movements often stood in stark contrast to the moral theory professed by the dominant segment of society. The liminality inherent in performance, whether implicit or explicit in Berthold's and Honorius's texts, reveals an essential characteristic of both the minstrel stereotype and the actual performers. The image represents the abstract notion of the border, but the living performer is also on the threshold because he traverses the boundary between the 'as if' world of the stage and the real world. What appears to be real on stage is planned and rehearsed and is, therefore, not the world of day-to-day experience. The performer loses quotidian identity when he performs one or more roles or switches between several voices in song. But what happens when the minstrel's role-playing is indistinguishable from that of the mendicant preacher? When both can change personas at will? Would the distinction between God's work and the devil's be undermined?

It is probably safe to assume that most preachers never lost the distinction between their sacred goals and what they perceived as minstrel activities, although some did. Berthold may have felt the encroachment of minstrels but may not have thought of himself as a performer as defined by contemporary performance theory. He, as many of his fellow mendicants, was probably quite sincere and 'believed in the impression made by his own act'.⁷⁸ Whether sincere or not, Berthold combined rhetorical strategies with the four basic techniques of dynamic movement to make his point effectively.

Even if preachers knew the difference between their role and that of minstrels, the general populace may not have. The vituperative in Berthold's sermon indicates his desire to warn the public. Presumably preachers and priests feared that ever fewer faithful were attending liturgical services. It appears they had to resort to or adopt theatrical techniques in order to capture listeners. In the process they blurred a theologically essential distinction between the function of sermons and profane performative events. Hence this fundamental conflict arose because they lacked a clear working definition of performance as well as a precise distinction between secular and sacred performance. Certainly the clergy were able to articulate it in theological terms, but the populace they were trying to attract and instruct were enticed not by theological distinctions but by exciting performances. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the dilemma of trying to lure ever more listeners to sermon and liturgy. What performance practices were available to clergy for attracting a large audience, or repeat audiences? How were these practices different from those employed by minstrels? For a successful performative event, performers then as now must satisfy the demands and desires of the spectators or listeners. Audience and performer are actually inseparable because the performer's actions have meaning only when an audience is present. It is now possible to delve into the magical interaction between audience and performer in both liturgical and secular events.

⁷⁸ See Goffmann, 'Performances' in Schechner, *Ritual*, p. 90.

The interaction is magical because something special happens when a performance comes alive, or as Jouvett describes it, a magnetic field is generated.⁷⁹

Performer–Audience Interaction

During a scenic event the performer creates a rapport and sometimes even a fellowship with the audience. Louis Jouvett has called it a magnetic field. The performer must engage the spectators at least to the point that they have a stake in the production so that they stay until the end. Sometimes a much closer fellowship or connection is established that captivates the audience. When this happens, in its most successful state, both performer and spectator are affected. The performer is completely caught up in the liminality of his performance consciousness, and the spectator too undergoes a transportation in consciousness. It may last only the duration of the performance, or continue for hours afterwards, or, the experience may even transform the person permanently. While it lasts, this transportation alters the way people perceive the world. The terms used to describe audience reactions like ‘enthralled’, ‘captivated’, and ‘mesmerized’ indicate a loss of judgement or, in medieval terms, loss of free will. Even the term *communitas* used by Turner to denote a spontaneous sense of unity suggests a blending in with the group causing a loss of individual identity.⁸⁰ Thinkers since Plato have known of and warned about this supposedly deleterious impact of performance, but it is contemporary performance theory that has devised a more systematic description of its transportive nature.⁸¹

For this examination of the techniques of presentation required of medieval performers, the implications of successful performer–spectator interaction lead in two directions: moral and aesthetic. If the fellowship or transportation changes people’s emotions and thinking, then the change may have either a positive or negative outcome. That is a moral issue. The corollary follows that if a truly transformative experience is to have beneficial results it requires the content of Christian truth and, therefore, must be controlled by the Church. This points not only to competition between preachers and minstrels, but places the relationship in a new light. The fact that people are attracted to and enjoy all types of entertainments and theatrical events and that minstrels know very well how to attract and capture an audience point toward aesthetic issues. The implication is that clergy, in increasing their efforts to attract worshippers, also began resorting increasingly to theatrical effects. We can call this minstrel tactics. Thus if there was indeed a competition, it

⁷⁹ Michael Redgrave, *The Actor’s Ways and Means* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 7.

⁸⁰ Victor Turner. *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), pp. 45–49.

⁸¹ Schechner, *Between*, pp. 117–50.

developed because of a genuine correspondence between the activities of the two parties.

Berthold von Regensburg's indirect comments are not our only source, for other clergy and priests also perceived a rivalry between priests and minstrels. Several other references to competition between priests and minstrels exist and also to priests acting like minstrels. There are so many, in fact, that they hint at a much more complex issue than forfeiting alms or merely losing a number of listeners to a minstrel performance now and again. And these texts refer to priests with regular parishioners, not to mendicants. If I am correct, then many priests took it upon themselves to try to attract worshippers by any performative means at their disposal. Turning now to Peter the Chanter (d. 1197) his complaint against priests corroborates my suggestion.

The fact that the Church needed to attract audiences and combat heresy must have encouraged many to make the liturgy and sermons more appealing and theatrical. Very much aware of the importance of gesture, Peter the Chanter was one voice among many who were adamantly opposed to what might be called minstrelizing the liturgy. His criticisms suggest that many priests (not only itinerant preachers) feared losing their parishioners to secular literature and its transmitters. So whatever the reason, the problem was that not enough people were attending mass, and the religious clergy were blamed for failing to attract parishioners and exercise adequate influence on them. Many priests reacted by adopting some performative techniques or strategies, and Peter the Chanter's criticism responds directly to these innovations in the liturgy.

In his *Verbum abbreviatum* Peter the Chanter wields the same, well-worn Latin Church discourse denigrating minstrels as a means to denounce priests for debasing the liturgy. The greater context of this passage is an attack on simony, but it seems priests were varying the forms of the liturgy so their parishioners would make more generous offerings.⁸² To emphasize the severity of the problem, he compares these priests with minstrels who switch from story to story in order to please their listeners. Thus when Peter censures priests, he, like Berthold, invokes *joculatores* to symbolize violators of Christian religious practice:

Hi tales sacerdotes similes sunt ioculatori vel fabulatori qui videns cantilenam de landerico non placere auditoribus statim incipit cantare de antiocho. Quod si non placuerit de Alexandro quo fastidito cantilenam permutat in appollonium vel karolum magnum vel quemlibet alium.⁸³

⁸² John W. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter the Chanter and his Circle*, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970) vol. 1, p. 204.

⁸³ *Verbum abbreviatum*, cited according to Baldwin who has taken it from the manuscripts, vol. 2, p. 143, n. 224.

[These clergy are like minstrels and storytellers who, when they see that the song of Landri does not please the audience, immediately begin to sing of Antiochus. If Alexander does not satisfy them, they fastidiously change the song to Apollonius or Charlemagne or someone else.]⁸⁴

Regardless of specific charges made against priests, these breaches indicate that a competition was thought to exist between priests and entertainers for the attention of the populace. Peter the Chanter's comparison is most interesting for its disclosure that priestly attitudes and practices converge on performance practice. As these two groups vie for the public's attention, the clergy resort to what Peter considers minstrel tactics. He describes how priests cater to the tastes of their listeners and thereby implies that the priestly function shares at least a few basic needs and goals with secular performers. The first suggestion is that both minstrels and priests must capture and retain the interest of the audience. But where performers achieve this with a diversified repertoire, priests reshape the liturgy to fit what Peter considers audience caprice. Secondly, the Chanter, like the priests he criticizes, assumes an intimate, causal connection between a listener's enjoyment and his purse strings.⁸⁵ These two forces do, in fact, regulate the audience-performer relationship, and priests appear to have been tapping into both. According to the Chanter's accounts of what priests were doing, these forces were becoming as crucial to sacred liturgy as to secular performances. There were two possible causes for this development: the clergy felt pressured to guarantee the regular attendance and donations of parishioners, and many priests also felt the lure of performative events of all kinds. Basically, because scenic events use many of the same techniques, and even rituals like the Catholic mass are performances, the degree of overlap is great. Since for Peter the goals of attracting the faithful obviously do not justify the performative means, he aims to divorce from the liturgy these appeals to the audience. Of course, not everyone thought as he did.

The charge that the clergy were applying minstrel techniques or practices goes deeper than the Chanter's short simile indicates at first glance. Concerned with both piety and aesthetics, several theologians couched their discussion in terms of the hazard that potentially anything of beauty (including music or any performative

⁸⁴ Baldwin and others take the reference to *Antiocho* to mean the *Chanson de Antioche*, a well known vernacular account of the crusades. However, the text lists a series of heroes (Landri, Alexander, Apollonius, Charlemagne) so it appears stylistically unlikely for a city name to appear in the middle of the series. Even if we have no extant stories about an Antiochus, I prefer to leave the issue undecided; see Baldwin, vol. 1, p. 204. The other literary heroes are better known: Apollonius of Tyre, Alexander the Great, Charlemagne (Karl der Grosse), and probably Landri, Count of Nevers who is mentioned in a few French romances. See Baldwin, vol. 2, pp. 143–44, n. 225–31 concerning the various names and a few of the texts they are found in.

⁸⁵ Baldwin, vol. 1, p. 204.

event for that matter) distracts from piety and serious worship.⁸⁶ If we take the two arguments seriously, that earthly beauty distracts from sacred worship on the one hand, and performative enticements are needed to gather worshippers into church on the other, we find a serious incompatibility. What churchmen reject in their moral arguments is precisely what they need in practice in order to draw people into sacred activities. Taking our cue from these two arguments, the conflict arises because medieval theologians lacked a discrete, practical distinction between sacred and profane events, and the populace even more so. This lack is felt, even if not clearly articulated, in the Chanter's statements and, as we shall see below, also in other contexts beyond the ecclesiastical record. One underlying issue for theologians then was the need to keep distinct the two separate spheres of existence—the sacred and the profane. In fact, the clergy was fully aware that music and the mixing of secular performance techniques with the liturgy would attract the laity. They went so far as to allow minstrels to perform in the mass since the Council of Trier (1227) felt it necessary to prohibit what was apparently frequent practice:

Praecipimus ut omnes sacerdotes non permittant trutannos et alios vagos scholares aut goliardos cantare versus super Sanctus et Agnus Dei in missis vel in divinis officiis, quia ex hoc sacerdos in canone quamplurimum impeditur, et scandalizantur homines audientes.⁸⁷

[We decree that no priest may allow itinerant minstrels and other wayfaring scholars or goliards to sing the verses to the Sanctus and Agnus Dei during the mass or in the divine office because the priest is hampered by it during the ordinary part of the mass and the listeners are scandalized.]

Theologians risked losing this distinction just as the Church councils did when they stipulated that comportment, time, place and activity distinguished between the sacred and secular arenas. Applying this yardstick, they attempted to prohibit dancing in churchyards, and merriment and levity at weddings and other sacramental celebrations so that parishioners would not lose the benefits of sacred ritual.⁸⁸ As

⁸⁶ This anti-aesthetics argument is especially typical of Cistercians. The best example is Bernard of Clairvaux's writings, as Umberto Eco explains in *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Hugh Bredin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 6, but see also my discussion of Aelred of Rievaulx below.

⁸⁷ Cited according to Robert Lug 'Minnesang und Spielmannskunst' in *Neues Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft*, vol. 2, *Die Musik des Mittelalters*, ed. by Hartmut Möller and Rudolf Stephan (Wiesbaden: Athenaion, 1991), pp. 294–16 (p. 296).

⁸⁸ As noted in Chapter 2, synods on matrimony remind all that weddings should be celebrated with reverence not levity. For additional examples from synods in the thirteenth century in which minstrels are prohibited from performing in sacred space, see Schwab, *Die Anfänge des weltlichen Berufsmusikertums in der mittelalterlichen Stadt*, Kieler Schriften zur Musikwissenschaft, 24 (Basel: Bärenreiter, 1982), p. 25, and Adolf Mönckeberg, *Die Stellung der Spielleute im Mittelalter* (Berlin: Rothschild, 1910), p. 22.

seen in the Chanter's warning, the risk was real that performative techniques could obliterate any and all distinctions between the two arenas. Thinking along these same lines, Herrad von Landsberg, abbess of Hohenburg (1167–95) opposed even liturgical dramas that she called *joci* (scenic events) and *ludi* (plays), because she believed that they abolished the distinction between clergy and laity.⁸⁹

In addition to the question of liturgical plays, a discussion of embellishments to the Church liturgy had actually begun as early as the eleventh century. There were three topics of concern: maintaining a clear distinction between sacred and secular spheres, evaluating the impact of various embellishments and entertainments on the worshippers, and assigning function and value to different kinds of performances. Peter the Chanter questioned the extent to which performative techniques were justifiable in Church liturgy itself and not simply in the liturgical plays. Where liturgy had a clearly defined function, secular scenic events did not and were, therefore, considered to be non-productive (*inutilis*). To shed new light on the medieval discussion, it is helpful to draw on an objective distinction between a ritual and a secular performance event. Performance theory gives us a way to analyze what was certainly felt as a danger, but left relatively unarticulated. Ritual can be defined and distinguished from performance using what Richard Schechner calls the 'efficacy–entertainment braid'.⁹⁰ He defines this concept in part by the relationship of audience to performance event and the status of the performers outside the event, but he primarily distinguishes the function of different types of performances.

According to Schechner's theory, the function of a performance can range from 'pure' ritual at one extreme to 'pure' entertainment at the other. Outwardly, as far as organization, lay out, and performance techniques are concerned, one cannot always tell if the scenic event is a ritual or entertainment. What determines a ritual is its effect on the spectators and participants. A wedding can be real or it may be part of a presentation, like a wedding within a play where all the formal signs, like clothing, properties, movements, music, the words of the vows are present. Both types of 'performance' are pre-planned, have a fixed set of movements and words, and normally require rehearsals (at least in the Euro-American tradition). But for the performers and spectators the difference is enormous: actors presenting a marriage ceremony on stage are not man and wife afterwards. The determining difference lies in the effect on the performers and on the audience. The ritual is efficacious; it changes the status of some of the performers and also the relations between spectators.

⁸⁹ According to Schmitt, Herrad von Landsberg complained, for example, that the Holy Thursday ritual of the washing of the feet confused the distinction between the lay people and priests, *Raison*, p. 274.

⁹⁰ I draw heavily on Schechner's thesis in *Performance*, Chapter 4, 'From Ritual to Theater and Back: The Efficacy–Entertainment Braid', pp. 106–52.

The primary performer in a ritual must always maintain the role he has when he officiates. This means a shaman or a Catholic priest must behave in certain ways in everyday life because his identity is equated by society with the role he plays in the ritual performance. For the performer in a secular event the situation is just the opposite. He may forget the role and live his ordinary identity until he gives another presentation.

For the spectators, a ritual is efficacious when it changes their relations to each other by forging them into a community. By community I mean here the spontaneous experience of belonging to a homogeneous, unstructured humanity created by the power of the ritual.⁹¹ In ritual, audience participation is not voluntary. If someone fails to attend, he forfeits something. For a ritual to be efficacious for the spectator, he or she must remain to complete the sequence. The other extreme on this continuum is the entertainment which, although pre-planned and rehearsed, has far less effect on the audience beyond enjoyment. The spectators can choose to stay or leave at any time. Rarely is there a change in status of either performers or spectators. The spectator comes to pass the time in a pleasurable manner or happens upon the performance by accident. Very few performances fit either extreme, but fall somewhere closer to the middle of the spectrum. Spectators always have some stake in watching a scenic event to its completion; often the performers are changed or transported in some way during the event, and less often, even the audience is transported and changed at least for the duration of the event. But normally a change in status takes place only in a ritual.

According to Schechner's analysis, the entire spectrum is potentially available in a culture at all times. But in practice, in some periods, the one end is privileged over the other: either ritual or dramatic performance is privileged. In our period ritual is strongly favoured whereas secular performance (and entertainment) is deprecated. What this means for performers and scenic events is that ritual performance is valued because of its perceived function to the detriment of other types of performative events that are deemed by comparison without usefulness or function, sometimes even if they are quasi-religious.⁹² If Schechner is correct about the medieval period, then we have a new perspective on the perceived competition between sacred and secular events and the strategy to overcome it. The concerns of the Chanter can now be rephrased as a latent tension between efficacy and entertainment. Since all performance events lie on a continuum, it is entirely possible that a slide can take place. Thus what is close to the ritual end of the continuum can accrue more entertainment attributes, and that shift can be perceived as a contamination of a religious rite by performance, or from a medieval perspective, a profaning of the sacred. In Schechner's terms this is loss of efficacy. The difference between ritual and other scenic events is not necessarily obvious because entertainment, though

⁹¹ See Turner's detailed explanation of three categories of *communitas* in *Dramas*, p. 169.

⁹² Schechner, *Performance*, pp. 121–24.

disvalued, lies at one end of a continuum with efficacy and revealed truth located at the valued end. Therefore, it is not unusual for the one to appear to take on the traits of the other, so that some clergy would perhaps see no harm in adopting and adapting a few techniques from entertainers as Franciscan preachers did.

The temptation to minstrelize the liturgy was difficult to withstand first because of monetary rewards, but also because many opponents as well as supporters of minstrels appear to have realized at least some of the elements necessary for a successful performance event: performers must not only attract listeners, but be sensitive to their moods and needs and adapt the performance accordingly. Performers must be ready to change pre-planned and rehearsed bits, and they must be theatrically alive to create the intensity that captivates and perhaps even convinces the audience.

Berthold von Regensburg and Peter the Chanter give us reason to believe that minstrels knew better how to satisfy their listeners than many priests. Minstrels knew that to tell the story of a saint or to sing an encomium successfully, they had to amplify the content in elaborate, yet easy to understand visual and aural terms in order to make an impact on the audience. Any hint of modesty or restraint in wording and presentation would indicate lack of style and conviction, and would fail to convince the listeners. Performers must give greater force to words, must vary the emphasis and elaborate with appropriate gestures calculated to counteract the minimizing and trivializing effect of the emotional and physical distance between performer, and listener or spectator. The same rule of performance intensity holds for voice modulation and facial expression. In none of these dare the performer exercise restraint or be subtle. Instead, he must magnify the normal inflections in order to be distinct enough to be readily understood. At all times, the audience must feel the performer's presence and be drawn to it. Failure at this can bring disaster.

The lack of clear distinction between sacred and secular theatrical events is illustrated by the medieval discussion concerning the mass itself. Already in the ninth century a precedent existed for interpreting the mass as drama. The allegorical interpretation of liturgy had already explained it in terms of dramatic action. As Osborne B. Hardison explains, 'the celebration of the mass contains all the elements necessary to secular performances'.⁹³ The earliest carefully laid out explication of the mass as dramatic narrative event comes from Amalarius, Bishop of Metz (c. 780–850). Although his work did not go unchallenged, it continued to be accepted until the sixteenth century, and not just in Germany.⁹⁴ In the twelfth century, Honorius Augustodunensis explains in his *Gemma animae* what Amalarius had presented and proves that he understood what a dramatic narrative or, in Schechner's

⁹³ Osborne B. Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages: Essays in the Origin and Early History of Modern Drama* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), p. 79.

⁹⁴ Hardison, p. 38.

terms, what twice-behaved behaviour is about. He describes the mass as an elaborate performance in which all participants have roles, and the celebrants quite elaborate ones, that recreate the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.⁹⁵ Hardison interprets Honorius's explanation in terms of classical dramatic categories when he writes that the mass has a coherent plot based on conflict between a champion and an antagonist that develops with rising action and then peaks in a climax with a dramatic reversal:

Sciendum quod hi qui tragoedias in theatris recitabant, actus pugnantium gestibus populo repraesentabant. Sic tragicus noster pugnam Christi populo christiano in theatro Ecclesiae gestibus suis repraesentat, eique victoriam redemptionis suae inculcat. Itaque cum presbyter Orate dicit, Christum pro nobis in agonia positum exprimit, cum apostelos orare monuit. Per secretum silentium, significat Christum velut agnum sine voce ad victimam ductum. Per manuum expansionem, designat Christi in cruce extensionem. Per cantum praefationis, exprimit clamorem Christi in cruce pendentis. Decem namque psalmos, scilicet a Deus meus respice usque In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum cantavit, et sic exspiravit. Per Canonis secretum innuit Sabbati silentium. Per pacem, et communicationem designat pacem datam post Christi resurrectionem et gaudii communicationem. Confecto sacramento pax et communio populo a sacerdote datur, quia accusatore nostro ab agonotheta nostro per duellum prostrato, pax a iudice populo denuntiatur, ad convivium invitatur. Deinde ad propria redire cum gaudio per *Ite missa est* imperatur. Qui gratias Deo jubilat et gaudens domum remeant.⁹⁶

[It should be known that those who recited tragedies in theatres presented the actions of those who fought by gestures before the people. In the same way our tragic actor [i.e. the celebrant] represents by his gestures in the theatre of the Church for the benefit of the Christian people the struggle of Christ and impresses upon them the victory of his redemption. Thus when the priest [presbyter] says the *Orate* [*fratres*] he expresses Christ placed in agony for our sake, when he asked his apostles to pray. By the silence of the *Secreta* he expresses Christ as a lamb being led to the sacrifice without uttering a sound. By the extension of his hands he represents the extension of Christ on the cross. By the chant of the Preface he expresses the cry of Christ hanging on the cross. For he sang [*cantavit*] ten Psalms, that is, from *Deus meus respice* to *In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum*, and then died. Through the secret prayer of the Canon he suggests the silence of Holy Saturday. By the *Pax* and its communication [i.e. the 'Kiss of Peace'] he represents the peace given after the Resurrection and the sharing of joy. When the sacrifice [sacrament] has been completed, peace and communion are given by the celebrant to the people. This is because after our accuser has been subdued by our champion in combat, peace is announced by the arbiter to the people, and they are invited to a feast. Then, by the *Ite, missa est*, they are ordered to

⁹⁵ Hardison, p. 39.

⁹⁶ *Gemma animae*, Chapter 83, PL 172, col. 570.

return to their homes with rejoicing. They say *Deo gratias* and return home rejoicing.]⁹⁷

To what extent Honorius thought of liturgy in Aristotelian terms is less important to my argument than the fact that he described a scenic event of twice-behaved behaviour that acts out allegorically the struggle and triumph of Christ over death. Accordingly, the mass incorporates all the elements of a ritual scenic event. It contains planned and structured bits of mimetic movement, extra-daily gestures and speech (including silences), chant (song), and direct address to the audience who are also participants responding at pre-determined stages of the event. The plot is carried through from initial crisis, the triumphant resurrection, and the apotheosis to the victory feast to which the participants are invited. Like all ritual, it has all the characteristics of performance and also maintains through its form and symbolism a meaningful experience that transforms the participants. The true events are not a re-enactment. They literally happen during the mass and are re-experienced so that all participants may attain a state of grace. In mass a performance takes place, but it makes visible what is not visible, and reveals sacred truth, and not just any event. It is a truth in which all participate so that all may be changed. The ritual is efficacious when Christ portrayed by the celebrant is resurrected, and the participants are invited to enter a state of grace. Thus the goal or function of the liturgy is its efficacy which should be absolutely clear to all the faithful.

In his interpretation Honorius makes clear that the mass was viewed as a scenic event as well as a ritual. For celebrants and parishioners it had value and function because it recreated the crisis and resolution of the salvation story, and bestowed the promised grace and peace. During mass the events become present, sacred time takes over, and all the objects, clothing, church space, timing, gestures, and biblical words, are calculated to make alive again the original events in the manner of any play or narrative that re-creates a set of events. Both are choreographed, planned, and not live, but nevertheless, are experienced by the celebrant and the congregation as a reality in the present. Ritual is, therefore, performance. And churchmen not only knew it, but they recognized the influence of the mimetic on the congregation. In practice then the techniques used in ritual and secular scenic event overlapped and posed a problem for many theologians.

The contemporaries of Amalarius attacked his interpretation for creating a liturgy for the masses and simpletons who did not need to understand the truths.⁹⁸ Later critics were also numerous. The Cistercian Aelred of Rievaulx (1109–67) in his *Speculum caritatis*, feared the ease with which both lay and religious could fall into the mistake of supporting more and more entertainment in liturgy and daily life, and in monastery, court, and town. Aelred warned that beauty distracts from worship and

⁹⁷ Here I follow closely Hardison's translation, pp. 39–40.

⁹⁸ Hardison, p. 38.

too many of the faithful would lose sight of the function and meaning of the liturgy and seek entertainment in it:

quid illa vocis contractio et infractio?[...] aliquando virili vigore deposito, in femineae vocis gracilitates acuitur.[...] Videas aliquando hominem aperto ore quasi intercluso halitu expirare, non cantare, ac ridiculosa quadam vocis interceptione quasi minitari silentium; nunc agones morientium, vel extasim patientium imitari. Interim histrionicis quibusdam gestibus totum corpus agitur.[...] Stans interea vulgus [...] attonitusque miratur...eos non ad oratorium, sed ad theatrum nec ad orandum, sed ad spectandum aestimes convenisse.⁹⁹

[what is that softening and weakening of the voice? Sometimes, with manly vigour cast aside, [their voice] is sharpened to reach the feebleness of the female voice. You will sometimes see a man not singing, but rather breathing out with his mouth open as if short of breath, and, having cut off his voice in a ridiculous way, almost menacing [the audience] with [complete] silence. Now they imitate the agony of the dying, now the rapture of the suffering. In the meantime their entire body is shaken by some kind of histrionic gestures. And the people, assisting in all this are stunned and bewildered, reckoning that they have gathered not in a house of prayer, but in a theatre, and not in order to pray, but to watch some show.]

A number of theologians sided with Aelred and rejected the idea that the goal of attracting parishioners to church on a regular basis should be met with a strategy of singing or minstrelizing. And so, additional complaints could be lined up to demonstrate the felt need for a precise, commonly accepted boundary between sacred and profane performance.¹⁰⁰ This debate indicates a true conflict. On the one hand, many demand that all performance techniques be excluded from liturgy. On the other hand, such techniques were already integrated into Church ritual by the ninth century when the first voices of disapproval were raised. Therefore, without a consistent definition that distinguishes sacred from profane events, it was not possible in practice to separate the two. This tension between the theory of morality

⁹⁹ Aelred of Rievaulx, *Speculum caritatis*, PL 195, col. 571. See also Hardison, p. 79 and E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1903) here vol. 1, p. 81, and most importantly, Timothy J. McGee, *The Sound of Medieval Song: Ornamentation and Vocal Style according to the Treatises* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). He cites Aelred's entire chapter with translation and detailed discussion of its musicological implications, pp. 23–26, 156–57.

¹⁰⁰ Reiterating the same complaints but this time with respect to liturgical drama, Gerhoh von Reichersberg (1093–1169) argues in his *De investigatione Antichristi* (c. 1161) that the clergy who turn the Church into theatre are doing the work of the Antichrist. There are also many general complaints about *theatralibus sonis et scenicis modulationibus* (theatrical mannerisms and stage music). See Hardison, p. 78 and Millet Henshaw, 'The Attitude of the Church Toward the Stage to the End of the Middle Ages', *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 7 (1952), 3–17 (p. 13).

and piety, and the types of scenic events people were drawn to continued to vex the guardians of that morality. Thus it was feared that performative embellishments were causing priests and parishioners to lose sight of the function of liturgy, and that this would cause the ritual of the mass to lose its effectiveness.

The second and equally important issue mentioned above was the transformative impact of the performing arts on spectators. If it had been possible to ban scenic events of all kinds, the problem would not have arisen. However, even churchmen knew the predilection of the public for lively entertainment of music, song, and dance. And so in the ninth century the Church had already recognized the public's desires and had begun to incorporate into its activities quasi-liturgical theatrical events and to import various performative adornments into the liturgy itself. Once this occurred, it was no longer possible to place a line of demarcation between profane and sacred events in practice. Thus when the Church needed to attract a greater audience, it had to find an aesthetic as well as a moral solution. What we have learned thus far is that the practical problem of drawing parishioners into church cannot be solved without considering the impact liturgical embellishments of any kind can have on the audience. We can assume then that some medieval writers had an intuitive (or even experiential) and accurate grasp of the attractions and pleasures of performance; they knew that the theatrical event pulls audiences into its sphere, its own reproduction of the world. Given their understanding of this pull, it is easy to understand the vehement demonization of Berthold von Regensburg and the passionate warnings of John of Salisbury who was seriously concerned about the perils of contact with performers and attending scenic events.

John of Salisbury was the twelfth-century moral theologian who understood best or at least wrote with the most fervour about the influence of all types of performative arts on audiences. He expressed criticisms that were aimed primarily at the secular court but occasionally also at liturgical practice. His *Policraticus* (1159) is worthy of our serious attention because John is one of the few writers who informs us about medieval views on the audience–performer relationship, that is, the influence of a scenic event on the audience.¹⁰¹ John adhered closely to the opinions of earlier conservative theologians and church decrees. But he is also stricter than the Church Councils and reiterates the familiar criticism we found in Honorius and Berthold that entertainers reject the faith by persevering in evil ways. Yet in spite of or perhaps because he is an ardent conservative, he has true insights: he intuitively or knows through experience just how strongly a performative event can affect an audience.

Like Hugh of St Victor and Aelred of Rievaulx, John writes from an ethical framework based on the precept of moderation, the key to all moral conduct and virtue. Virtue then is defined as that which is appropriate to the nature of man.

¹⁰¹ I use Clement C. J. Webb's edition, *Policraticus* (Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1965), and the translation by Joseph B. Pike, *Frivolities of Courtiers and Footprints of Philosophers* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1938).

Moderation (*moderamen*) is a regulatory concept that allows one to measure conformity to or deviation from nature and therefore to judge a person's virtue. Ultimately, one can do as one pleases but the morality or moderation of the action depends upon considerations of time, place, cause, and the person's status. If any Christian exceeds or transgresses the intrinsic, natural limits in any of these ways, he commits a crime, or an error where error implies heresy (Book 1, 2). This statement, like the ones in the secular laws and ecclesiastical records discussed already, does not apply to minstrels. They are already considered transgressors because what they do is judged unnatural, illicit, immoderate or because they commit certain acts at an inappropriate time or place or for an improper reason.

In practice, the concept of what is natural enables John to cast a wide net and to criticize all who hold feasts and make pleasure. With it he captures the entire performance aggregate and examines all its components: performer, supporters (audience), place, and time.¹⁰² Art forms, he states categorically, that exceed the bounds of nature are illicit and cannot be permitted. Taking a rather radical stance he blames the nature of performance itself for its enervating influence on the audience and is particularly distressed about the time and place of some performances—even in church—maintaining that the service is defiled with the effeminate voices and musical phrasing that astound and enervate simple souls.¹⁰³ So we see that John, like Peter the Chanter and Aelred of Rievaulx, is just as critical of performance in sacred space as in secular space:

Ipsam quoque cultum religionis incestat, quod ante conspectum Domini in ipsis penetralibus sanctuarii lasciuientis uocis luxu, quadam ostentatione sui, muliebribus modis notularum articulorumque caesuris, stupentes animulas emollire nituntur.¹⁰⁴

[The very service of the Church is defiled in that before the face of the Lord, in the very sanctuary of sanctuaries, they, showing off as it were, strive with effeminate dalliance of wanton tones and musical phrasing to astound, enervate, and dwarf simple souls.]¹⁰⁵

The music of voice thus distracts the pious from worship and weakens them. For if the sanctity of an object derives from its veneration, then whenever the attention of worshippers is drawn off by any performance, the Church loses control over the power of the sacred. And this power is then channelled in another direction. It follows then that succumbing to enjoyment results in losing free will, that is, a surrender of rationality, a loss that is tantamount to mortal sin. John points out the additional vices including gluttony, enervation or effeminacy and idleness that result

¹⁰² The breakdown of performance into its constituents is found in Schechner, *Between*, p. 119.

¹⁰³ John of Salisbury I. 6, see Pike, p. 32.

¹⁰⁴ John I. 6, Webb pp. 41–42.

¹⁰⁵ I cite the translation by Pike, p. 32.

from the pleasure of amusements and scenic events. This is the way, he claims as did so many others mentioned earlier, performance and, therefore, minstrels endanger devout individuals and weaken the Church.

Upon turning his attention to the court, John finds the allure of secular entertainment there seriously alarming and professional entertainers reprehensible because they make a lapse of moderation and morals possible:

At nostra etas prolapsa ad fabulas, et quaeuis inania, non modo aures et cor prostituit vanitati, sed oculorum et aurium uoluptate, suam mulcet desidiam, luxuriam accendit, conquirens undique fomenta uitiorum. Nonne piger desidiam instruit, et somnos prouocat instrumentorum suauitate, aut uocum modulis, hilaritate canentium, aut fabulantium gratia, siue quod turpius est, ebrietate vel crapula?¹⁰⁶

[But our own age, descending to stories and all sorts of folly, prostitutes not only the ear and heart to vanity but also delights its idleness with the pleasures of eye and ear, inflames its own wantonness, seeking everywhere incentives to vice. Does not the idle man provide for his idleness and court slumber with the sweet tones of instruments and vocal melody, with the gaiety of vocal performers or the pleasure of storytellers, or, what is even more disgraceful, in drunken revels?]¹⁰⁷

John's criticism here focuses on the vanity of the pleasures of the physical senses and worldly beauty. The vices conspire together. Idleness leads to vanity and mistaken pleasures of music, song and storytelling. The senses are indulged until they lose all sense of moderation and may even drag the person into drunken revels. The listener or spectator thus loses judgement, discipline and orientation. And becomes enthralled by the physical world.

I think John genuinely desired to outlaw all performance arts and all pleasures of the senses but found it necessary at times to exercise moderation himself. For he knew that disallowing all performative events was impossible. Nor does John condemn performers in every passage. Like others before him, he upholds the fundamental premise that recreation is necessary for all human beings. To adjudicate between the ideal and practice, he tries to distinguish between the responsibility of the performer, and the responsibility of the audience for the consequences of performative events.

In the same breath John both castigates performers and attempts to allow for their work: *Nec tamen histrionem assero turpiter in arte sua uersari, etsi indubitanter turpe sit esse histrionem.*¹⁰⁸ [I do not, however, assert that the minstrel is dishonourable when he follows his profession, although it is undoubtedly dishonourable

¹⁰⁶ John I. 8, Webb, pp. 46–47.

¹⁰⁷ The translation is from Pike, but I have changed certain key words: I use 'stories' instead of 'romances', 'vocal melody' instead of 'vocal singing', 'vocal performers' instead of 'musicians', and 'storytellers' instead of 'narrators of tales', p. 37.

¹⁰⁸ John I. 8, Webb, p. 46.

to be a minstrel.]¹⁰⁹ Here he distinguishes between the person and the actions of a performer and reduces the blame slightly by allowing that the individual himself may not be a dishonourable person. Bards are an exception. He approves of those who sing of ancient deeds because they and their epics are suitable in both style and content for entertaining eminent guests.¹¹⁰ At fault are the possible excesses of any performative event, including the accompanying immoderate behaviour (and even histrionics) of the entertainer. A scenic event need not contain excesses by definition, as his example of the bard demonstrates. But in cases where excesses are used to entice the senses, specifically the eye and ear, he censures both the supporters of performances and the performers because he too knows that a performance requires these two parties. This point is important because few writers make this distinction quite so explicit. To be sure, John distinguishes between musicians (*musicus*) and singers (*cantares*) on the one hand and other types of minstrels like *histriones* and *mimes* on the other. This distinction becomes important for other theologians, too, who try to justify at least some forms of entertainment even though they use different terms. When John allows for recreation and performance based on moderation, he claims he has no charges to make against singers or musicians (VIII, 12). But his protest is convincing only if accepted without considering the rest of the work, for he is not always successful in separating the performer from the performative act. Normally when he denounces the one, he denounces the other as well.

In general, however, John finds fault with the entire class of professional performers as well as occasional, non-professional performers because he finds excesses everywhere: one case is the example John cites in which Sallust criticizes Sempronia because she sings and dances too well: '*Psallere saltare elegantius quam necesse est probae*'. *Optime tamen cantare si citra leuitatem posset haberi plane desiderabile est*.¹¹¹ ['She sings and dances better than is necessary and proper for a virtuous woman'. Yet to sing excellently, if this perfection can be attained without levity, is clearly desirable.]¹¹² He states this even though he recognizes that perfection perhaps cannot be attained without excess, frivolity or acts that incite suspicion. Surely it is no accident that he chooses to cast a woman in the role of temptress using performance. Female entertainers make an easy target because they are burdened with the sins of both Eve and Salome. But whether a male or female performs, and whether that person is professional or not, it is the outcome, namely the audience's loss of judgement that John fears most. He is not at all innocent of the emotive force of a performance and has genuine reason to fear it, even in the mass.

¹⁰⁹ Translation by Pike, p. 36.

¹¹⁰ John VIII. 6, Webb, p. 259.

¹¹¹ John VIII. 12; Webb, p. 310.

¹¹² John refers here to Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 3.14.3; translation by Pike, p. 368.

John frames the phenomenon of the captivated audience in the Augustinian moralistic and religious terms of servility to evil.¹¹³ Although he speaks in ethical terms, he is actually focussing on aesthetics, on the appeal and enjoyment of entertainments. They are enjoyed for their own sake and often do not contribute to a greater purpose. This is important for us because of his insights into the impact of performance art on an audience. He objects to singing and music, even in church, because it is generally characterized by excess. Quite understandably he cautions readers against the specifically captivating power of music and song. He fears greatly the pleasure any intense performance can produce because it can cause one to forget any other purpose. In the following perceptive description of the emotional impact of performance, he does not place blame on minstrels so much as on the altered state any performance may produce. And to make his point, the analogy with the feminine seductive force of the sirens is particularly illustrative. He refers specifically to singing in church, a context normally unconnected to minstrelsy. Nevertheless, at stake is the affective impact of every successful performance:

Cum praecinientium et succinentium, canentium et decinentium, intercinientium et occinentium prae molles modulationes audieris, sirenarum concentus credas esse, non hominum, et de uocum facilitate miraberis, quibus philomena uel sithacus, aut si quid sonorius est, modos suos nequeunt coaequare. Ea siquidem est ascendendi descendendique facilitas, ea sectio uel geminatio notularum, ea replicatio articulorum singulorumque consolidatio, sic acuta uel acutissima grauibz et subgrauibz temperantur, ut auribus sui iudicii fere subtrahatur auctoritas, et animus, quem tantae suauitatis demulsit gratia, auditorum merita examinare non sufficit. Cum haec quidem modum excesserint, lumborum pruriginem quam deuotionem mentis poterunt citius excitare.¹¹⁴

[When one hears the excessively caressing melodies of voices beginning, chiming in, carrying the air, dying away, rising again, and dominating, he may well believe that it is the song of the sirens and not the sound of men's voices; he may marvel at the flexibility of tone which neither the nightingale, the parrot, or any bird with greater range than these can rival. Such indeed is the ease of running up or down the scale, such the dividing or doubling of the notes and the repetitions of the phrases and their incorporation one by one; the high and very high notes are so tempered with low or somewhat low that one's very ears *lose ability to discriminate*, and the mind, soothed by such sweetness, no longer has power to *pass judgement* upon what it hears. When this type of music is carried to the extreme it is more likely to stir lascivious sensations in the loins than devotion in the heart.]¹¹⁵

¹¹³ For a thorough study of St Augustine's attitudes toward the theatre see Werner Weismann, *Kirche und Schauspiele. Die Schauspiele im Urteil der lateinischen Kirchenväter unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Augustin* (Würzburg: Augustinus, 1972).

¹¹⁴ John I. 6; Webb, p. 42.

¹¹⁵ Translation by Pike, p. 32, emphasis mine.

John does not simply manipulate the symbol of transgression, noting that singers do what is unnatural (singing like birds, etc).¹¹⁶ His is a much stronger claim—that performance can defile the spectator and the Church. As he describes it, performance is a spiritual or mental transportation analogous to Schechner's definition. It has the effect of transporting a spectator into a state where he loses control of rational faculties and the ability to distinguish right from wrong. This characterization proves that he genuinely understands the affective power and sway of a truly successful, beautiful performance and finds it morally perilous for this very reason. He attributes to performance and to the delight it provides an ominous, potentially irresistible power to enslave.

In a scenic event as the one John describes, the singers are actually in control: they wield a force that, in collusion with one or several artistic modes, takes control of our mind and senses, causing loss of judgement. John thus considers performers to be extremely powerful. The image of sirens, the ancient symbol of deadly, feminine forces of music that ensnare men's senses is particularly apt for his purposes, for they, too, exist outside the boundary of civilized society and humanity but cross the border with their song. Thus by analogy in John's example, singers possess demonic and therefore, lethal power because they cause the mind to lose judgement and eventually, open the door to debauchery.

Two things are significant in his treatment of enticements and the attraction of performative art. First he expresses his opinion that the forces of temptation and entrapment are feminine, or monstrous, or both. Here again John is in good company for any number of moralists like Peter the Chanter and Otto of Freising also call them monsters:

Contra dantes histrionibus. Nullum genus hominum est, in quo non inveniatur aliquis utilis usus contra necessitates humanas praeter hoc genus hominum, quod est monstrum.¹¹⁷

[Against giving payments to minstrels: there is no group of people, among whom there has not been discovered some useful custom which can provide for human needs; an exception is this group of people that is monstrous.]

Secondly John indicates that the transportive power of music and song can bring about positive or negative results: the emotional pleasure thus won can lead either to harmony and a glimpse of heaven or into the devil's clutches. In this passage John specifically concentrates on music and hearing, but he also discusses the enticements

¹¹⁶ Imitating birds was a popular act. Konrad von Megenberg lists a tripartite division among household minstrels whom he calls *vibroductus*, *cyroductus*, *aviroductus*, that is, singer, instrumentalist, and imitator of birdsong. This is found in his *Yconomica* (1350) Chapter 48, cited by Christopher Page, 'German Musicians and their Instruments: A Fourteenth-Century Account by Konrad von Megenberg', *Early Music*, 10 (1982), 192–200.

¹¹⁷ Peter the Chanter, *Verbum abbreviatum*, XLIX, PL 205, col. 155.

of the eye and is anxious ultimately about the slavery of all the senses. This servility and loss of freedom in Augustinian terms means an inability to serve God and consequently, damnation. Clearly, for John the seductive power of the performing arts is based on arousing passions that cannot exist in moderation. Any performer today would agree in this (for example, Barba and Grotowski).¹¹⁸

What John of Salisbury and others mean by moderation may apply to the concept of performance intensity. The intensity may be high or low, but it refers to the manner in which an audience is drawn into the performance. It controls the manner of audience involvement and participation; they may be consciously reflective or unconsciously involved.¹¹⁹ The intensity of the theatrical event controls the audience–performer dynamics. Normally, both audience and performer recognize the ‘as if’ nature of the performance; they are aware it is a staged, consciously and intentionally composed happening. But if the performance is intense enough, it overcomes the reflective, rational faculties and pulls the audience in completely. John’s siren metaphor signals this very danger. Moreover it expresses the churchmen’s fear of the irreversibility of the performance experience for they understood its ability to restructure the system by changing the perceptions and beliefs of the audience. Sirens are thought to cause madness, which is a loss of social values and norms—and every performer is a potential siren.¹²⁰ As Schechner has pointed out, every performance, modern or traditional, is a consequential, irremediable and irrevocable act that can transform an audience: ‘Because the theatre is subjunctive, liminal, dangerous, duplicitous it must be hedged in with conventions: means of making the place and the event safe. In safe precincts at safe times actions can be carried to extremes, even for fun’.¹²¹

Although John is greatly concerned here with the loss of free will being the result of a captivating performance, what he reveals about his understanding of performance itself is far-reaching. First of all, he is acutely aware of the power of performance. Secondly, he understands how audiences can be receptive to suggestion and extremely easily influenced by a performance. This does not mean that members of the audience are innocent supporters of entertainments, however.

¹¹⁸ Schechner states, ‘the idea that people generate “auras” of various kinds is true. Also group energies are greater and different than either individual energies or the sum of individual energies’, ‘Aspects of Training at the Performance Group’, in *Actor Training 1*, ed. by Richard P. Brown (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1972) pp. 3–64, (p. 14). Louis Jouvét’s term for the unity of audience–performer is a magnetic field according to Redgrave, p. 7.

¹¹⁹ Schechner, *Between*, p. 12.

¹²⁰ On the music and fear of the sirens, and especially their increased appearance in art during the twelfth century, see Reinhold Hammerstein, *Diabolus in Musica. Studien zur Ikonographie der Musik im Mittelalter* (Bern: Francke, 1974) pp. 82–89.

¹²¹ Schechner, *Essays*, p. 20. The quotation comes from Schechner, ‘Introduction’, *Essays*, p. 2.

John realizes that entertainers need the audience and considers the listeners even more blameworthy because they foster performers. As a result, he condemns equally all those who flock to entertainments and support minstrels. John also finds serious fault with the courtiers and nobles who recruit entertainers in order to gain the favour of others at court under the pretence of providing entertainment (VIII. 2). When he censures the supporters of entertainers in this manner, it balances and tempers his comments about minstrels. Sometimes it seems he cannot decide which group to blame more, for he speaks with fear of the power of the entire performance aggregate to enthrall the audience. At the same time, the spectators contribute to their own enslavement (VIII. 12).

When John selects feminine forces to characterize the power of the performer, his statements are significant for our context because they express more than just the basic misogyny of theologians. The feminine force represents seduction *per se*. He first complains of the feminizing effects of plainchant on male voices and the pious. By using the dancer Sempronia as example, he next highlights her transgression and debases at the same time the irresistibly seductive power of the performing arts. Finally, his strongest comparison is the siren image. Here he reduces performers to a lower status than even women, for women are an acknowledged, integral part of a community. In contrast, the sirens are feminine monsters, liminal figures, and by extension, so are minstrels.

Consequently, because they are applicable to all performance modes, the four components of performance—time, place, performer and audience—dictated minstrel lifestyle. Specifically the type of audience but also the location and timing of a performance governed the choice of genre and topic. Religious festivals required different entertainments than did private weddings, and large sophisticated courts expected different levels and types of presentation than small towns. The audience was the primary factor, however, not just because they made requests, expecting the entertainer to offer a large repertory, but also their social status *vis à vis* the performer allowed them to demand a certain style and artistic level. To be successful, performers had to train their body in extra-daily movement and to learn an appropriate complement of gestures. Further, they developed techniques for representing several postures and personas at the same time to produce a dynamic, captivating performance. And most importantly, the successful performers cultivated the audience. The greater the vitality and intensity in the performance the greater the rapport created between entertainer and entertained. The ability then to react to an audience and its mood was paramount. But these abilities and activities clashed head on with social norms.

In conclusion it is possible to say that the concepts of moderation and congruence of inner and outer being that produces harmony and beautiful manners were impossible for minstrels to follow. It is imperative to recognize the fact that the range of performative styles, and degrees of artistic ability and propriety was wide, but that minstrels transgressed. The instruments, songs, and stories heard in taverns and private homes might have been the same ones heard in nobles' courts, we don't

know, and it is likely that at a court the talent of the performer and style of presentation was of a higher aesthetic level. What we can safely say, however, is that in all instances a successful performance that captivated the audience transgressed the dictates of moderation and harmony as defined by the churchmen and courtesy books. In other words, the requirements of performance prevented performers in general from conforming and making inroads into society. If they were ever to be accepted, it had to be on their own terms. Any compromise would endanger the existence of all performative arts.

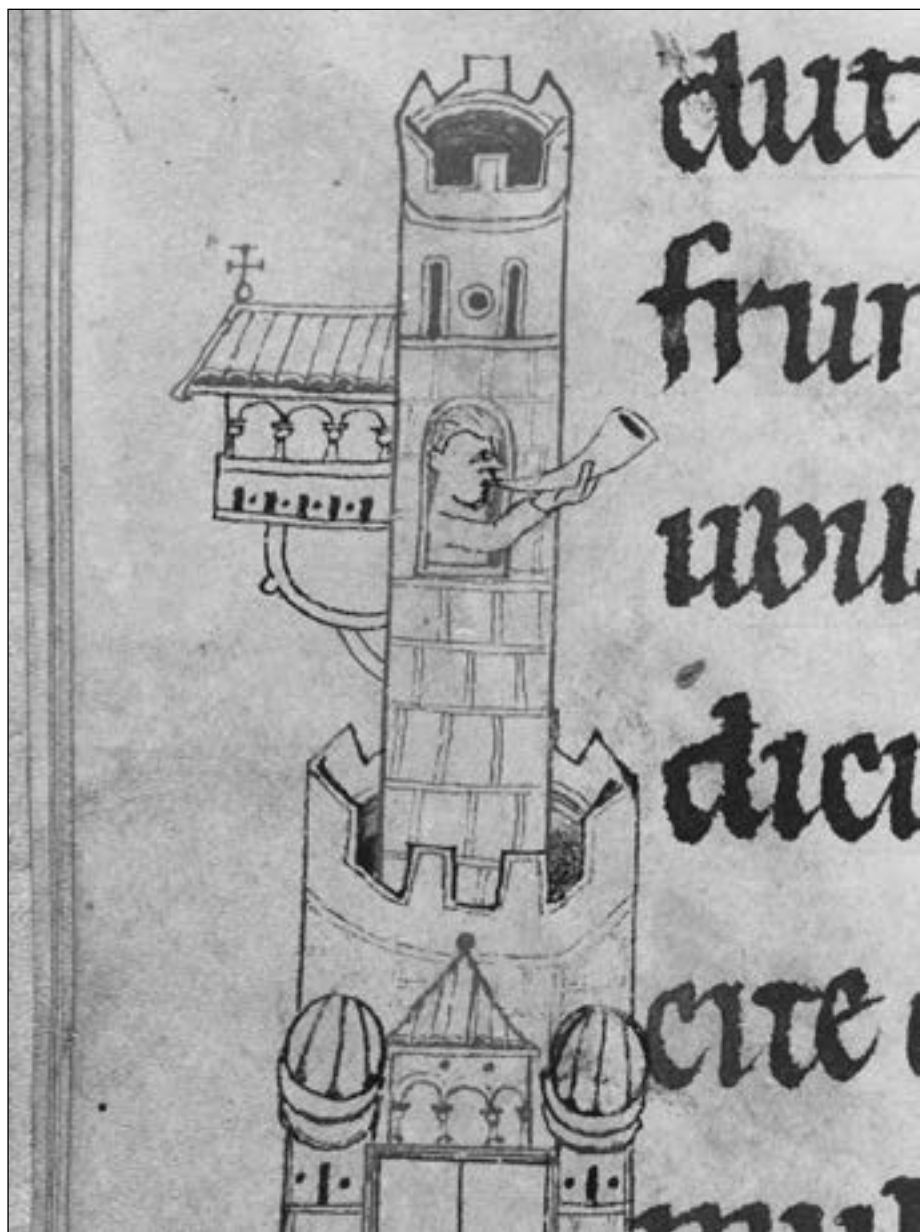


Fig. 2. Tower musician, Initial I from a Psalter, c. 1200–50, cod. 66, folio 47, Stiftsbibliothek Heiligenkreuz, reproduced by permission of the Institut für Realienkunde, Austrian Academy of Sciences.

He used you as his *vox populi* [...].
A wise ruler does not lend an ear
only to his courtiers, but tries to
understand how his subjects think, too.

Umberto Eco

CHAPTER FOUR

Mobility and Versatility at Court and in City

In previous chapters we found that the status of pariah, however demeaning, grew out of society's need to define itself and set borders. As a result, those activities and traits that endangered that self-definition were projected onto minstrels. The basic reason for their outsiderhood appears to be that their performative activities cannot be accomplished from within established social norms. Thus, if the legal system cannot readily accommodate them, if the language of social categories does not apply to them, if neither secular society nor the Church community can define an acceptable place for them, then how did they survive? And survive they did. They contributed to culture at court, in city, and in village. The lesson here is that the ethical system of texts central to the medieval Christian community cannot explain the values and material lifestyle of performers.

It is now time to address the values and material conditions of the performer's life and the potential for social integration thus far missing from my analysis. The two arenas in which performers were most active are the court and the city. The places to turn are peripheral sources, that is, sources seldom analyzed by literary historians until recently.¹ These documents include the household expenditures of German

¹ Accounts of expenditures at court and city statutes have not been totally ignored by literary historians. Anyone studying Walther von der Vogelweide has read the published travel account book of Wolfger von Erla. Other accounts are less well used, but see for example: Ursula Peters, 'Herolde und Sprecher in mittelalterlichen Rechnungsbüchern', *ZfdA*, 105 (1976), 233–50, and Fritz Peter Knapp, *Die Literatur des Spätmittelalters in den Ländern Österreich, Steiermark, Kärnten, Salzburg und Tirol von 1273 bis 1439*, Geschichte der

territorial princes, and the municipal tax and rent records, statutes, and land registers. These sources offer an impartial glimpse into specific aspects of daily life. What we see through their window is relatively objective. However, because the window is narrow, it lets us view items only in isolation, without a connection to other aspects of performers' lives.

My purpose here is to discover how the demands of the performing profession governed minstrels' lives. What was required to produce and perform music and poetry? What opportunities did court and city offer these people? No study concentrating on medieval minstrels has yet sought to establish what they did in order to survive and develop their talents as performing artists.

Previous studies have interpreted minstrels and their activities primarily from society's prescriptive centre. Brandhorst and Scheele trace the performers' increasing social stability and protection of their person and property.² This procedure implies that loss of wealth and lack of skills caused individuals to drop out of society and become entertainers as a last resort and not by choice.³ There must have been many such cases, but scholars dwell too much on their poverty and hardships of itinerancy calling them *entwurzelte Existenzen* (lives without a centre).⁴ Browe is even harsher and refers to minstrels collectively as *verkrachte Existenzen* (failed lives).⁵ Hence these scholars fail to understand the glamour and bondage of the performing arts. As Martha Graham put it: 'And the artist is doom eager, but never chooses his fate. He is chosen, and anointed, and caught'.⁶ Thus the schema used until now is too limited to portray the complex lives of performers. I maintain that these very same documents can also reveal a much more differentiated picture of the performer's condition than recognized thus far.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries part time work or underemployment was the norm. Work was seasonal with periodic bursts of activity. In between these seasons or bursts people sought odd jobs. Work in the court accounts is compensated per job for artisans, and per performance or assignment for servants and entertainers. Since performance art was not yet sufficiently developed to allow for specialization, full employment specifically for performing did not exist. This meant that versatility was essential. As we shall see, court accounts record a cluster of related jobs and tasks including carrying messages, scouting out information (espionage), locating people, and verifying the identity of knights asking for fiefs to be renewed. This

Literatur in Österreich von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, 2 (Graz: Akademische Druck- u Verlagsanstalt, 1994–99).

² Brandhorst, pp. 166–72; Scheele, 'Spillute', pp. 315–57.

³ Brandhorst, p. 157. Hartung shares the same misconception even in his new book, *Fahrende*, pp. 105–13.

⁴ Brandhorst, p. 115.

⁵ Browe, pp. 248–49.

⁶ Martha Graham, *Blood Memory* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 118.

variety indicates that people could not specialize. Entertainers who were able to perform in a number of media and for a great variety of occasions were better able to find work as itinerants and as domestics because they could fit in everywhere temporarily in a society that was not wealthy enough to employ more than a very few who were not involved in either the production of food and material or the maintenance of the Church. Consequently minstrelsy entailed a great variety of roles and assignments and required many skills. Thus the closest a performer could come to full time employment was to be a household minstrel or a municipal musician. This chapter surveys the opportunities at court, in the city, and on the road.

The account books of the various larger and smaller courts of the nobility are extremely useful for tracking minstrel activities. Together they describe the range of minstrel activities, the varying degrees of mobility, the odd jobs they performed at courts, and the opportunities gained by moving from court to court and making the rounds of cities. From their bounty of details I sketch a composite picture by looking for all activities and services performed by minstrels. The picture I draw is admittedly speculative, one that suffers from occasional gaps. Nevertheless I hope to show that entertainers performed a multitude of different services at court in both military and defensive situations as well as in festive and quotidian settings, and that these services contributed to their artistic skills and activities.

The situation in cities is equally complex and deserves to be examined separately. Several scholars have worked through most of the urban sources on performers and have compared German and French cities, but it is truly difficult to make out trends.⁷ I, too, rely heavily on these same materials for there is no alternative to the data they provide. However, rather than compare information from many different cities to discover what conditions were like in 'the city'. I attempt to correct for cultural and legal differences in time and location by focussing on one city—Vienna. Here I describe the complexity of minstrels' activities in a single place and time period, and in which their economic and social conditions stand under the influence of the city council and, in addition, a powerful ruling family—first the Babenberg and then the Habsburg dynasty.

⁷ The following scholars have scoured the same urban source materials and have constructed a composite picture of minstrel lifestyle that may not hold for any single place: Brandhorst, Hartung, Moser, Page, and Salmen. They have also attempted to show that minstrels in cities made a concerted effort to lead a settled existence. However, constructing such a composite situation across Europe may not hold. By far the most thorough search has been made by two musicologists: Gerhard Pietzsch and Keith Polk. See the three books by Pietzsch in the bibliography. Polk's careful study of instrumental ensembles relies on Pietzsch and on additional municipal sources, but he is interested mostly in the period after 1400, *German Instrumental Music of the Late Middle Ages: Players, Patrons and Performance Practice*, Cambridge Musical Texts and Monographs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

The primary characteristic running through city and court documents is that minstrels are mobile. Itinerancy clearly contributed to their stigmatization because they often lacked a fixed domicile and parish membership. However, mobility is more than mere itinerancy. Freedom of movement brought a number of advantages. Geographic mobility or travel enabled minstrels, even domestics, to become familiar with many regions. Social mobility, or access to all levels of the social hierarchy, allowed them to gather and pass on information from one level to another. The sources discussed below prove that minstrels, both the completely itinerant and the liveried domestics, retained at least partial freedom of movement. Since domestics, too, travelled frequently and often traversed great distances, they must have gained considerable advantage from it.

The ability to cross geographic and social boundaries is a great advantage for performers because they always need to seek out new audiences. Itinerant entertainers usually had access to many types of houses and ranks of people: small castles, great courts, taverns and markets in villages and cities, and small private cottages. Whether wealthy or poor invited them in, they would play for each audience, in every venue. Even if no documents mention jam sessions where performers came together, they most assuredly played together in impromptu ensembles and exchanged parts of their repertoire. If then, as jazz and folk singers today maintain, it is the pride of a performer to be able to entertain any type of audience anywhere, then it would be advantageous and desirable to travel and seek out ever new audiences of all kinds.

Admittedly, the frequent movement of entertainers undermined ties to territory and parish, and even to the family—that most important economic, social and political unit in medieval society. But if they were locked out of the normal relations given by birth, mobility gave them the opportunity to cultivate new, if temporary, ones on an individual basis. Their relations to people were thus built on service. The frequency of their appearances at court testifies to a certain success. I find indications that many performers were able to capture or earn the favour and even the trust of a host. On the one hand, it was possible even for itinerants to enter the service of a household or town council based on their personalized services and individual loyalty. On the other hand, the lack of binding social ties also meant that a performer could serve anyone he wished, and could also cancel service relations and change allegiances when necessary or expedient. Of course, this means he was a free agent who could be unpredictable, unreliable, and occasionally, ungovernable.

The Court

The court as an institution exhibited its own internal cohesion and goals. Every court needed to display wealth and power constantly and performances in various media fulfilled this goal. In addition, members of a court enjoyed more leisure than many a segment of society and welcomed frequent informal and formal entertainments. Any

number of performers could be hired for temporary employment at any time. The diverse sums listed in the records suggest that there was no fixed pay scale for entertainers (in contrast to city regulations) but in general, performers were paid according to status. Inadequate remuneration sometimes caused them hardship as didactic singers repeatedly assert, but the court also offered the possibility that a performer would be taken into the household. Such employment depended upon the minstrel's performative talent, reliability, ability to curry favour, and on the generosity of the host, and the courtiers and ladies who composed the potential audience. The account books reveal a variety of opportunities for performers.

Wealthy households kept some sort of record of income and expenditures from an early period although very few of the early ones from the thirteenth century have survived. Unfortunately, German imperial court accounts are not extant until mid-fifteenth century.⁸ Our earliest documentation of court expenses comes from the Bishop of Passau, Wolfger von Erla, whose travel accounts cover eleven months from September 1203 to July 1204. This is the much-studied record containing a payment to Walther von der Vogelweide and needs very little discussion here.⁹ The next set of account books from the dukes of Tyrol covers the years 1250–1350. From the fourteenth century two account books have survived, one from Bavaria-Holland (1368–1393) and the other from the *Tresslerbuch* of the Teutonic Knights (1399–1409). By this time the clerks of the bursar's office were becoming more and more systematic about the format and content of their entries. Nevertheless, they can skew our understanding of life at court because clerks were not always able to record every transaction, especially those that did not involve money.

Account books record household expenditures including payments to travellers who arrive at court, be they entertainers, delivery people, artisans, or messengers. Each book becomes the gate that registers ingress and egress giving the impression that its particular court stands at the crossroads of the world. The records give no sense that anything of interest exists outside of the purview of the bursar's office. Only information that is essential for tracking the purpose and authorization of expenditures is included. Some accounts, like the Tyrolean, survive in the original, hastily and tersely form scribbled as the payments were being disbursed. Others

⁸ For a summary of the extant imperial accounts see Gerhard Pietzsch, *Fürsten und fürstliche Musiker in mittelalterlichen Köln. Quellen und Studien*, Beiträge zur rheinischen Musikgeschichte, 66 (Cologne: Volk, 1966), pp. 42–55.

⁹ The life and court of Wolfger von Erla, Bishop of Passau and Patriarch of Aquileia and his relationship to performers, especially Walther has been the object of much study and speculation. The accounts have been edited by Herwig Heger, *Das Lebenszeugnis Walthers von der Vogelweide. Die Reiserechnungen des Passauer Bischofs Wolfger von Erla* (Vienna: Schendl, 1970). There are many studies, but most useful are two collections: *Wolfger von Erla. Bischof von Passau (1191–1204) und Patriarch von Aquileja (1204–1218)*, ed. by Egon Boshof and Fritz Peter Knapp (Heidelberg: Winter, 1994) and *Walther von der Vogelweide. Beiträge zu Leben und Werk*, ed. by Hans-Dieter Mück (Stuttgart: Stöffler und Schütz, 1989).

come down to us in a later, corrected copy. Yet even in a clean copy like the account book of Bavaria-Holland, the information provided is scanty, formulated with minimal syntax using standard formulae. Entries vary a good deal, however. Each scribe has his own spelling, terminology and favourite phrases, and when, as in some books, the scribe changes every few pages, it becomes very difficult to determine if a person is listed more than once.

The accounts of the Tyrolean court in Austria are extremely valuable because they are the earliest records for a secular court in German speaking territories and because they mention poet-singers whose strophes are extant.¹⁰ These early books are fragmentary and less well organized than the later ones, so that they illustrate well some of the interpretative difficulties connected with documents of this type. Dates are given only occasionally in the early years. From time to time the clerks Latinize German proper names (*Seidlino*, *Mihsnerio*) and nouns (*sagario*, *singaerio*, *spilerio*) without much consistency although almost all of the text is in Latin. In addition, clerks use terms designating performers without elaboration, so that it is not possible to know what type of performance the person actually offered. Sometimes the same person is designated differently in each entry: Hanchampf is listed as *cantor* (1294) and as *ystrio* (1295), Johann of Latsch as *sager* (1335) and as *cantor* (1338).¹¹

When two different terms designate the same person, for example *sager* and *cantor*, it is reasonable to assume that some difference was perceived between those terms. But one cannot assume further that when two terms appear clerks *consistently* differentiate between them. Rather, because these terms occur together or are substituted one for the other in so many thirteenth and fourteenth century documents, it is safer to assume that a precise and consistent distinction has not yet become

¹⁰ The court of the Dukes of Tyrol and Carinthia has been studied for its economic and political rise in the late twelfth century with Meinhard II who instituted the keeping of accounts. See Otto Stolz, *Der geschichtliche Inhalt der Rechnungsbücher der Tiroler Landesfürsten von 1288–1350*. Schlern-Schriften, 175 (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner, 1957) and Christoph Haidacher, *Die Älteren Tiroler Rechnungsbücher (IC. 277, MC 8) Analyse und Edition* (Innsbruck: Tiroler Landesarchiv, 1993). All references to minstrels active in Tyrol are listed according to year of the entry and date if available. They are cited according to Ludwig Schönach's excerpts in 'Urkundliches über die Spielleute in Tirol. Von der Mitte des XII. Bis zur Mitte des XIV. Jahrhunderts', *ZdFA*, 31 (1887), 171–85 in which he collated several account book entries chronologically. He reprints the same entries as in the earlier publication with one or two additions and also adds useful commentary in 'Die fahrenden Sänger und Spielleute Tirols 1250–1360', *Forschungen und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte Tirols und Vorarlbergs*, 8 (1911), 1–8, 119–26.

¹¹ Given these terminological problems, some historians like Constance Bullock-Davies prefer to be inclusive. In fact, she is the first scholar to include all the different activities named in household accounts including waferers under the heading 'minstrel' in *Menestrellorum Multitudo: Minstrels at a Royal Feast* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1978) pp. ix–xli.

common usage, and that each clerk used his accustomed vocabulary. Of course, the clerk could provide additional information about the person if he knew about the performance, but such knowledge was accidental. The *Tresslerbuch*, for example, elaborates on the usual formula for payment in September, 1405 with a particularly charming comment: *½ mark eyne sprecher gegeben, der do sang als eyne nachtegal* (½ mark given to a speaker who sang like a nightingale, p. 360).¹² This clerk's phrasing, that a 'speaker sang' suggests that clerks had their fixed phrases and terms but could elaborate at any time, and that the elaboration describes the event more precisely than any formula.

The Tyrolean court was rather small and of modest means in comparison to others. The extant charters and accounts of 1250–1350 paint a rather intimate court frequented by performers from the region. The intimacy of the court shows through the entries where almost every performer, including many local itinerants, is listed by name and often by an additional distinguishing feature. The fact that naming the individuals is the rule indicates that these people were known to the staff. Many were local entertainers making their rounds mostly in the immediate region.¹³ For example, Johann from Latsch, and Hendricus *ioculator* of Castelrotto were at home in the region whereas Hanchampf, Hovelich *cantor*, or Seitlin *cantor* may have been recurrent visitors from farther away.

Where a reference indicates a general category or the instrument played but no name, the person was probably an itinerant, and possibly from outside the region. When visiting domestic minstrels were paid, their lord was noted. The various performer designations are *cantor*, *singaerio* (singer); *joculator*, *ystrio*, *spilaer* (minstrel); *lirator* (hurdy-gurdy player); *sager* (speaker or singer), *tubicinator* (trumpeter), *fistulator* (piper or shawm player), *buccinator* (trumpeter or horn player); *vigellator* (fiddler).¹⁴ The most frequent references are to singers (24) and to generic minstrels (24) followed by 21 pipers and 17 fiddlers. Only 4 speaker or reciter entries were made.¹⁵ Unfortunately, since these categories are not adequately discrete, and performers were extremely versatile, we must assume that the clerk was not always told about the performance itself; some singers recited and played

¹² My references giving page numbers are taken from the original edition of the Teutonic Knights. Commandery of Marienburg. *Das Marienburger Tresslerbuch der Jahre 1399–1409*, ed. by Erich Joachim (1896; Bremerhaven–Mitte: Kneiss, 1973). Although the *Tresslerbuch* has been reprinted, access to it is still difficult in the US.

¹³ Schubert also uses personal names to locate the home regions of a number of minstrels in Germany, p. 58–59.

¹⁴ See Bowles's explanation of all the terms pertaining to brass instruments and trumpets in 'Unterscheidung der Instrumente Buisine, Cor, Trompe und Trompette', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 18 (1961), 52–72.

¹⁵ To determine what types of performers were most frequent, I counted all occurrences of each term and not the number of performers because it is rarely possible to know if the same person is mentioned in different terms or how many individuals are included in a plural.

instruments, and some musicians also sang. I calculate that three or four household minstrels worked for the court at any given time. For the period from 1298 to 1303, the group consisted of at least 2 fiddlers (Hüntli and Heinrich), 1 hurdy-gurdy player (Master H), and perhaps 1 singer (Heinrich *cantor*).

The Tyrolean minstrels were much better integrated into the community than my study of customary and ecclesiastical laws (Chapter 2) and the conclusions of social historians have led us to expect. Already in the second half of the thirteenth century during Meinhard II's reign, several minstrels are listed as witnesses in documents concerning land ownership. More than one entertainer owns property: Hainzlin the piper has property in Bolzano (1320), and Heinrich the minstrel owns half a farmyard or enclosure (1327). Since these names appear in charters, they are most likely domestics of the dukes of Tyrol. Some minstrels practised a second trade. A certain Henricus appears in charters that reveal him to be an artisan-performer. Apparently he performed part time and made a living in Cembra as tailor (1330). In addition, he owned property and seems to have had regular business dealings with the magnates in the area of Bolzano and Castelrotto.

The dukes of Tyrol seem to have excellent personal rapport with musicians who are likely domestics because two entries note a common meal. On 6 April, 1303 the duke's two fiddlers, Hüntli and Heinrich, ate with him, and on 22 June of that year H. fiddler ate at Duke Ludwig's table but are not listed as performing.¹⁶ Since it is not likely that the lord would ever dine completely alone, the minstrels might have been invited to provide witty conversation, in the manner of the classical parasite.¹⁷ According to Martindale's English, French, and Italian sources such intimacy was not unusual. He relates that Giotto was often invited to court because the king liked to chat with him.¹⁸

Although visitors from a distance were somewhat infrequent, the ducal records indicate that a number of domestic and itinerant minstrels came through as did a few important visitors. Johan of Luxemburg visited in Tyrol in 1329. The familial and

¹⁶ 6 April 1303: *Hüntli et Heinricho figellatori, quod comederunt cum domino meo*; 22 June, 1303: *eodem die H. figellatori eo, quod comedit cum domino duce Ludwico*.

¹⁷ It is more than likely that a clever and well informed minstrel could indeed carry the conversation at mealtime. Martin Warnke gives examples of painters who become the confidant of their lord with access to him day or night precisely because of their ready wit and ability to entertain, *Hofkünstler. Zur Vorgeschichte des modernen Künstlers* (Cologne: DuMont, 1986), pp. 17–23; Andrew Martindale also offers evidence that painters became conversation companions to their masters in *The Rise of the Artist in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972), pp. 36–41.

¹⁸ Martindale has shown in a number of examples from fourteenth and fifteenth century France and England that visual artists were often used as courtiers and entertainers just as minstrels were. He mentions Giotto and in France, Jean Coste had the title of *peintre du roy* (the king's painter) in 1351 and in 1367 he is listed as *peintre et sergent d'armes du roy* (the king's painter and sergeant-at-arms), pp. 36–43 (pp. 36–37).

political connections of the Dukes of Tyrol and Carinthia are exemplified by the frequent visits of Margrave Ludwig of Brandenburg in the years 1342–45.¹⁹ The travelling domestics compensated belong to the Bishop of Freising, the Duke of Austria, and the Duke of Luxemburg. The court also hosted Dyerlin, Emperor Ludwig IV's fiddler, and the Duke of Saxony's singer. Itinerant minstrels, fiddlers, and shawm players came from Bavaria in 1303 and singers from the Rhineland in 1305. When the duke's wedding was celebrated in Carinthia in 1328, Augsburg sent town waits to perform.

Minstrels come and go all year even during the Alpine winter although visits are clearly more frequent during spring. For the year 1303, eleven different payments were made to entertainers from the end of March to mid-November with a hiatus in August.²⁰ That means a paid performer appeared about every two weeks. Whether some minstrels stayed for several days or simply for a single performance remains unclear. In between these dates, the domestic minstrels may have been performing. No extra expenses for festivities are recorded. Performances occurred in a number of different castles in Tyrol, not in a central location.

Of the itinerants who came to Tyrol three very special names not found in any other records need to be mentioned. They name well-known poet-performers whose songs have come down to us.²¹ Heinrich von Meissen, known as Frauenlob, is listed as minstrel in 1299. He may have been in Tyrol on an errand for Duke Heinrich of Carinthia but no performance is mentioned.²² The second name is Regenbogen. Listed as singer, he appeared at the Tyrolean court in 1302 and received only a meagre sum of two pounds.²³ Not very many of his songs are extant, but they include the same varied repertoire as Frauenlob's songs including moral-didactic and

¹⁹ Excerpts from Ludwig V of Brandenburg's itinerary for 1323 to 1361 show that he was a frequent visitor in Tyrol and Carinthia and corroborate the entries in the Tyrolean accounts for payments to his minstrels in the years 1342–45. These payments are annual stipends from Ludwig's holdings in the area and do not seem to refer to any performance at the Tyrolean court, see Flamin H. Haug, 'Beiträge zum Itinerar Ludwigs V. des Brandenburgers', *Forschungen und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte Tirols und Vorarlbergs*, 5 (1908), 133–44, (pp. 135–36).

²⁰ The dates recorded for 1303 are 20/3; 6/4; 9/5; 21/5; 15/6; 20/6; 22/6; 9/7; 11/10; 3–5/11; 11/11.

²¹ I discuss this genre of didactic-political song (*Spruchdichtung*) and by implication the lives of these three singers in Chapters 6 and 7.

²² 17 August 1299: *Ex hiis ystrioni dicto Vrowenlop pro dextrario marc. xv iussu domini ducis Heinrichi ex litteris* (given to the minstrel called Frauenlob 15 marks for a charger by order of Duke Heinrich).

²³ August 1302: *in Media silva cuidam cantori dicto Regenbogen lib. ii.* (In Mittewald, [Eisacktal] to the singer called Regenbogen 2 pounds.) What we know of the lives of these two poets from their songs corroborates the evidence in the accounts. For Frauenlob see *VL* vol. 2, col. 865–78, and for Regenbogen, *VL*, vol. 7, col. 1077–87.

encomiastic songs as well as those describing and praising exceptional contemporary events. In contrast, the singer called Mihsnerio (1303) was paid a handsome twenty pounds by the order of Duke Otto.²⁴ He is quite possibly the well-known didactic poet-singer Meissner because he was in the Bohemian and Austrian area about the same time as Frauenlob when he sang in praise of Rudolph of Habsburg. Whether he actually made it to Tyrol afterwards as Frauenlob did remains undecided.

The court of Albrecht II, Duke of Bavaria (Straubing), compared to Tyrol, was larger in size and by far the most active court studied. The extant account books contain the years 1368–71 and 1389–93.²⁵ Coming almost fifty years after the last Tyrolean entry, they record only a short period but are abundantly detailed. The earlier book has only three entries referring to minstrels, but happily the second is detailed enough to paint a rather colourful picture of household activities. Straubing was small enough that scribes could write remarks about individuals, yet also wealthy enough to support special preparations for annual tournaments and elaborate carnival celebrations. Noteworthy is the very close familial interaction between the two separate and distant regions of Bavaria and Holland which imbues the Straubing source with an inter-regional perspective. The same perspective holds for the larger Dutch court located in The Hague. Household servants, minstrels and messengers all have frequent contact with their counterparts from the other court. One assumes, for example, that the Bavarian clerks who kept the records were aware of customs and prices in Holland when paying out expenses for the messengers sent back and forth. The Hague, run by Albrecht I, the father of the Albrecht in Straubing, has been well described as a powerful court, for Albrecht was fully aware of the importance of performance art for public display of dignity and power.²⁶

²⁴ 14 June 1303: *item Mihsnerio cantori lib. xx per litteras ducis Ottonis*. (To the singer Meissner 20 pounds by order of Duke Otto). For the most recent evaluation of the evidence for Meissner's sojourn in Austria and Tyrol see Knapp, *Die Literatur des Spätmittelalters*, p. 420 and *VL*, vol. 6, col. 321–24.

²⁵ Dick E. H. de Boer, University of Groningen, has generously given me access to his transcription of the Bavaria-Holland account books he is preparing for publication. Citations taken from de Boer are listed by folio number. The dates of entries cited also have been furnished by de Boer. The account book for the year 1393 of Wolfhart Helttampt was published previously as '*Nota liber rationis Walfardi Helttampt*', in *Sammlung historischer Schriften und Urkunden. Geschöfft aus Handschriften*, ed. by M. Freiherr von Freyberg (Tübingen: Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1829), vol. 2, pp. 81–168. Now de Boer has corrected several errors. Karl Euling has published a few of Helttampt's accounts for the years 1389–93 as an appendix in *Studien über Heinrich Kaufinger*, *Germanistische Abhandlungen*, 18 (1900; Hildesheim: Olms, 1977), pp. 120–22. Entries cited from published sources are designated as coming from Helttampt or Euling with page numbers.

²⁶ Frits van Oostrom, *Court and Culture: Dutch Literature, 1350–1450*, trans. by Arnold Pomerans (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 17.

Wolfhart Helttampt, who was responsible for the accounts of Duke Albrecht II of Bavaria-Holland, favoured organization by categories and tried to list all like expenditures together. Among his categories are 'knights and servants' (*ritter und knecht*), 'artisans' (*hantwercher*), 'horses and geldings' (*ross und maiden*), 'regular expenses of domestic servants' (*ehalten und ander gedingt meins herrn knechten*), 'special expenses for carnival festivities' (*hofherren vasnacht*), 'minstrels' (*varende laute*), 'miscellaneous' (*mangerley*) and 'room and board' (*zerung*). These last four provide more information than the others on the activities of minstrels from abroad, including both domestics and itinerants. The category 'minstrels' includes all visiting performers who travel even if they are normally attached to a household and wear livery. The category of regular expenditures is intended specifically for listing the expenses of the household servants (*knechte*) including minstrels. 'Miscellaneous' appears to have been a convenient catch-all. These groupings were often more relevant for the scribe than the person described. The fact that entertainers, like many other servants and hired workers, are located in so many categories confirms their ill-defined status and part time work. This conclusion holds even if we make allowances for the fact that a great many entries in almost every category record unexpected expenses.

Albrecht's own six or so domestic minstrels are listed when they are issued livery, once for the winter and once for the summer outfit. Those receiving a salary listed under regular expenses are the pipers or shawm players Liebel, Hensel and Haider, the trumpeters Pertold and Liebel or Lieblein, and Chuntz the drummer in 1389 (fol. 38^r). The following year Ullein the young piper (fol. 85^r) is added. Heintzl, a lute player, joins the household in 1392 (fol. 112^r). Albrecht's chief minstrel is Liebel the piper who is in charge of organizing interludes and other special ensemble performances whenever a large festivity is held.

The court held a major carnival celebration annually that offered an opportunity for elaborate entertainment including a tournament: 1390 in Landshut (fol. 44^v), 1391 in Nürnberg (fol. 80^r), 1392 in Straubing (fol. 107^r, 133^v), and 1393 in Heidelberg (fol. 144^v). It was the chief minstrel's task to plan and direct the entertainments. A feast required entertainments such as interludes for the banquets, music and song during other meals, a tournament, dancing, and other participatory activities. In addition, Liebel probably directed the domestics who ushered guests and cast out the uninvited. Many of the preparations and expenses for these celebrations are recorded. Liebel is noted as carrying or delivering an *Abenteuer* to the festivities. What the word means is not clear, but it must refer to the entertainment. It may refer to properties and costumes for the interlude or mumming or decorations for the feast.²⁷ Costumes must have been worn, either by performers

²⁷ 1392: *Liebl dem pfeiffer zerung mit der aventewr zu dem hof Herrn Vasnacht iii lb.d.; Perchtolden dem pusawner desgelichs mit der aventewr ii lb.* (to Liebel the piper, travel accommodations to the lords' carnival with the 'abenteuer' 3 pounds in deniers; to Perchtold the trumpeter the same amount with the 'abenteuer' 2 pounds, fol. 107^r); 1392: *Liebel dem*

or by the guests and hosts because fabrics are bought for the occasion. Duke Albrecht paid a tailor to have a shaggy woollen tunic made for Liendel the king's singer specifically for carnival. The minstrels appearing at these special festivities are simply mentioned as a group, and the nature of the performances is never stated. Nevertheless a festive celebration like this one is a special opportunity for domestic performers and temporary hires. They were able to play in ensemble with a larger variety of instruments than normally available and present several types of pieces not normally performed. Liebel's role in these festivals as organizer of the entertainment is unmistakable because he is given money to pay the minstrels.²⁸

The tournament and feast at Heidelberg must have been an especially big celebration because preparations and expenses are recorded in much more detail than in previous years. That year Albrecht had a special outfit sewn (127^v). He also borrowed money from two citizens of Regensburg for staging the tournament.²⁹ He then sent his blacksmith to the Bishop of Salzburg to borrow a tournament horse (*sperross*).³⁰ Pfaffenvangen the armourer was given money to buy the necessary weapons and supplies.³¹ Preparation for the feast required the repair of riding equipment, the purchase of many fabrics for costumes and banners, wax for candles, and assorted spices³². The fabrics are most likely intended for costumes and banners. During the tournament 114 horses for the servants alone needed food and stalls (fol.

pfeiffer mit der aventewr gein Prag vi ellen, zu xxvi d., facit v s. vi d. (to Liebel the piper with the 'abenteuer' to Prague, 6 ells at 26 deniers makes 5 schilling 6 deniers, fol. 116^r); 1392: *des burkgraven knecht mit einer aventewr geben ^slb.d.* (given to the burgrave's servant with the 'abenteuer' [1] pound in deniers, fol. 134^v).

²⁸ Liebel is given money twice according to the records. The first entry applies to the festival held in Straubing, 1392 and the second for Heidelberg, 1393: *an pfintzttag darnach Liebel dem pfeiffer geben das er domit solt ausrichten all spilaut di hie bein dem hof gewesen worn iii lb.d.* (on the following Thursday to to Liebel the piper 3 pounds in deniers so that he can pay all the minstrels who were here at court, fol. 133^v); *Item eodem die Liebel dem pfeiffer geben zu Haidlberg, davon er von meins herrn wegen aufrichten solt all spilaut zu dem hof xii guldein.* (and on the same day in Heidelberg to Liebel 12 gulden from which to pay all the minstrels at the court on behalf of my lord, fol. 148^v).

²⁹ 1392: *So han ich Eingenomen von dem Gamrit und Heinrich dem Zeller Burger zu Regensburg. di sy meinen herrn zu dem Hof und dem Torney gein haidlberg gelihen habent lxxv Pfd. lx Pfg.* (I received 75 pounds and 60 pence from Gamrit and Heinrich the toll collector, citizens of Regensburg, who have lent money to my lord for the court festivity and tournament in Heidelberg, Helttampt, p. 93).

³⁰ 1392: *Heintzel dem Smid Zerung gein Saltzburg zu dem Bischof meinen herrn umb ein gut Turneis oder sperros. das er im das solt sendten her zu dem hof herrn vasnaht* (To Heintzel the blacksmith for travel to Salzburg to my lord the Bishop for a tournament horse that he [the bishop] should send here for the lords' carnival. Helttampt, p. 94).

³¹ Helttampt, p. 134.

³² Helttampt, p. 161.

143^v). Expenses for the smith, saddler, cooks, and for the food, wine and beer are listed daily for the week they spent there.

During the rest of the year many performers came to Albrecht's court on a weekly basis. In the winter minstrels are recorded coming about once a week in 1391 and 1392, and in the summer, 26 June–25 September, minstrel performances occur 1½ times a week on average (fol. 134^r). Minstrels who come as itinerants or as domestics are usually listed under the rubric of *varend liute*. Because of the international political role of Holland, the noteworthy people who sent minstrels to Straubing are far greater in number than in Tyrol. I mention only a few: King Wenceslas and his brother Johann, the King of Hungary, the Duke of Braunschweig, the Duke of Austria, the Duke of Lancaster, and the Bishops of Salzburg, Passau, and Prague. When domestic minstrels arrive at a court they have most likely been sent there on a specific errand. For example, as Albrecht's records indicate, Hennsl the piper, who was sent to Regensburg, was given money for expenses upon departure and return.³³

The types of performers recorded here exhibit a number of differences in comparison to Tyrol. The use of *herold* at the end of the fourteenth century is new.³⁴ It appears first in German at this time although as a category it is not yet distinct from 'minstrel'. The frequency and types of performers are as follows: the 56 pipers or shawm players listed, including Albrecht's own domestics, far outnumber all other categories. Piper is a generic term referring most often to those playing woodwinds, especially shawms.³⁵ Fiddlers are listed 49 times, heralds 24, lutenists 15, trumpeters 12, and drummers 3 times showing that the instrumental offerings and performance styles have shifted. The lute first became a popular instrument after 1350 in Straubing as in Vienna and Prague, and was not mentioned in the Tyrolean records at all. The situation with singers and with the terminology for singer–reciters is more complicated than with instrumentalists. In the Bavaria-Holland accounts the category of *sprecher* (speaker, reciter) appears 32 times whereas singer occurs only

³³ 1391: *Hennsl dem pfeiffer zerung geben gein Regenspurg, schuf mein herre selb do er sich wolt versuchen lassen lx d.* (given to Hennsl the piper, travel costs to go to Regensburg, by order of my lord himself since he wanted to make an inquiry 60 deniers, fol. 84^v). *aber Hennsl dem pfeiffer geben do er herab kom van Regenspurg und von der werlt gesagt was lx d.* (again to Hennsl the piper when he returned from Regensburg and gave his news, fol. 85^r). Other performers like the emperor's singer Liendel, and the duke's piper Liebel, are recorded as being sent on errands as well.

³⁴ Other scholars agree, see Peters, 'Herolde', p. 244, and Stephanie Cain Van D'Elden, *Peter Suchenwirt and Heraldic Poetry* (Vienna: Halosar, 1976), pp. 18–19.

³⁵ Edmund Bowles, 'Tower musicians in the Middle Ages', *Brass Quarterly*, 5 (1961/62), 91–103 (pp. 98–99). Polk states that references to pipes really meant shawms until after 1450, pp. 50–51; see also Fritz Ernst, *Die Spielleute im Dienst der Stadt Basel im ausgehenden Mittelalter in Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* (Sonderband 44, 1945), p. 206.

11 times, and eight of these singer entries refer to the same person, King Wenceslas's singer Liendel.

The shifting designations for singer and speaker raise a twofold question concerning the use of the terms and possible changes in mode of delivery. Terms for singer and the frequency of the terms change drastically between 1200 and 1400 in the account books I've examined. Wolfger von Erla's travel accounts list one single *cantor*, and that is Walther von der Vogelweide.³⁶ Because of this unique designation and his large remuneration (equivalent to high-ranking emissaries), it has been speculated that he was of higher social status than other performers or that his performance was of a higher caliber.³⁷ The only other instances of the term *cantor* occur in the feminine form. During his journey in Italy Wolfger hears *cantatrices* twice, once in Ferrara and again in Siena.³⁸ As in all other entries, we have here no idea what type of singing these women performed although they are certainly professional performers.

Where the Tyrol accounts list more singers than any other performer except for the generic category of minstrel, in the Straubing accounts, the speakers far outnumber the singers. What has changed? What was the reason for the preponderance of singers in Tyrol, 1250–1350? Did tastes and genres change so drastically by the end of the century that Duke Albrecht wanted to hear primarily reciters and almost no singers? No simple answer is possible. With respect to Walther, we have too little knowledge of Wolfger von Erla's tastes to be sure why he is the only one listed as singer. As for the other courts, the possibility seems very likely that styles and tastes changed between 1300 and 1400, albeit not drastically. The Tyrolean court was visited by at least three very popular poet-minstrels who composed melodies and sang even though one is referred to as *ystrio*.

That Albrecht II was interested in both recitation and song may be deduced from his relationship to Liendel, King Wenceslas's singer. Mentioned in Helttampt's earliest entries, Liendel is a recurrent and well-paid performer in Straubing. As he continues to be listed for five years, the outline of a relationship can be traced.³⁹

³⁶ The reference in Heger (p. 86) reads: *Sequenti die apud Zei[zemurum] Walthero cantori de Vogelweide pro pellicio v. sol. longos*. (The day after in Zeiselmauer to the singer Walther of Vogelweide for a fur coat 5 long solidi (=150 deniers).

³⁷ Many scholars have been trying to establish Walther's status based on Wolfger's account book. Several arguments are based on the formulation in the accounts where it has *Walthero cantori de Vogelweide* instead of *cantori Walthero*. See Manfred Scholz's discussion of Heger, Hucker and Curschmann in 'Der biderbe patriarke missewende fr̄i und dominus Walterus—auch ein Versuch zum Begriff des fahrenden Spruchdichters' in *Wolfger von Erla*. ed. by Boshof, pp. 301–24 (pp. 308–09). This usage is not unique; it has parallels in the Tyrolean accounts, e.g. *Johanni cantori de Laetsch*, 1338 (Schönach).

³⁸ Heger, p. 93.

³⁹ The entries listing Liendel covering the years 1389 to 1393 are as follows: *Item an montag nach Reminiscere Liendl dem juden, des Romischen kunig singer, geben zu zerung*

Liendel attended the carnival celebrations regularly. One year he received from the duke a fool's outfit, which can only be a costume for his participation in the carnival entertainments and another year another a tunic designated specifically for carnival. The political connections between Liendel's lord, King Wenceslas, and Albrecht are also significant here. Albrecht sends his minstrels to Prague frequently, and also goes himself in 1392. It would, therefore, not be surprising if Liendel, in addition to his singing, functioned as a trustworthy emissary between the emperor and Albrecht. If so, then Liendel may well have visited Straubing for reasons other than performance. The duke certainly seems to have liked him a great deal. In 1392 Liendel is even listed as *weilant des romischen kunigs singer*. The term *weilant* would indicate that Liendel has left the emperor's service to join the household in Straubing. The account books don't say, but Liendel may have had cause to leave Prague since Wenceslas was losing control and was imprisoned just two years thereafter. It is also possible that this entry is a mistake because the very last entry again lists Liendel as the emperor's domestic.⁴⁰ An alternative interpretation is that over the years, the phrase became a standard epithet in the bursar's office. That Liendel was a trusted go-between is certain. Possibly he was a confidant of both men or an informer for one. Martindale offers evidence that artists in other media (painters) also found shelter in the intimacy of their master. One such example is Girart d'Orléans a painter who was employed on and off by the royal French court (1328–50), and then when John the Good ascended the throne, he became '[...] our beloved *familiaris* [...] painter and usher of our hall' and received a salary higher than that paid to regular ushers.⁴¹

The genre question continues to vex, however. If the use of performance terms is imprecise, how much can these records actually tell us about changing performance practice and popularity of singers in the fourteenth century? Literary historians have noted that the transmission and the variety of thematic content of didactic and

umbe einen maiden und sust zerung, darumb man in von dem Jacobe lost, schuf mein herre und sein viztumb [chamberlain] 3 Pfd. 10 d. (Euling p. 120). Item des Romischen kunig singer, dem Chuntzen, Liendel und iren gesellen III schokch gross, facit XVIII s.d. (fol. 29^r); Item an dem selben tag dem Liendel des Romischen kunigs singer umb einen narrenkchitl XXXII d. (fol. 32^v); Hof zu Lanndeshut. Item der cappellan und Liendl singer von VI pferden stalmiet zum Wurffl III s. amberger, facit LIII d. (fol. 44^v); Item Stiglitz dem sneider geben das er Liendl des romischen kunigs singer ein chutten gemacht het zu der Vasnacht s lb. XII d.(fol. 58^v); Item Liendlein des romischen kunig singer kaufft einen maidem umb XXXII guldein, macht VIII lb.d. (fol. 73^v); Item an pfintztag nach Alexi Liendel Weilant, des Romischen kunig singer, geben I lb.d. (fol. 134^r); Item Liendel des romischen kunigs singer II guldein (fol. 144^v).

⁴⁰ Pietzsch has also been unable to ascertain whether Liendel actually joined Albrecht's household, *Fürsten*, p. 49.

⁴¹ Martindale, pp. 41–42.

political songs declines towards the end of the fourteenth century.⁴² This may be due in part to a performative and generic shift in emphasis from song to poetic recitation without melody all over Germany. Fortunately The Hague may offer additional context for the Straubing accounts. With the accession of Albrecht I in Holland, a decidedly German shift occurred in literary production as ‘many Middle Dutch texts took on a clear German sound’.⁴³ Also, the recitation as opposed to the singing of poetry became a valued artistic genre in The Hague beginning about mid-fourteenth century.⁴⁴ Soon thereafter master speakers or reciters like William von Hildegaersberch were frequent performers at court.⁴⁵ The same aesthetic preference may be manifesting itself in Straubing.

To this declamatory, non-melodic mode of presentation belong also the heraldic encomia and poetic battle descriptions that are popular all over Europe at this very time. The best representatives of the genre are Gelre Herald (fl. 1380–1402)⁴⁶ working for the dukes of Gelderland, and Peter Suchenwirt (fl. 1347–95) associated primarily with the Habsburg court.⁴⁷ The poetry of these poets follows a distinctive, strict formula presenting the deeds and blazoning the arms of the person lauded.⁴⁸ The court of Bavaria-Holland was supportive of such declamatory poetry because of its intimate contact with the Dutch court and because Suchenwirt found work there. While serving the Straubing court in 1370 or 1371, Suchenwirt might possibly have made a trip to Holland. Nevertheless it is unlikely he would have met Gelre because

⁴² See Helmut Tervooren’s summary of the gradual decline of thematic variety in the *Spruchdichtung*, in *Sangspruchdichtung* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1995), p. 126. It was Frieder Schanze who demonstrated the historical transformation of didactic poetry into *Meistergesang*, in *Meisterliche Liedkunst zwischen Heinrich von Mügeln und Hans Sachs* (Munich: Francke, 1983).

⁴³ Van Oostrom, p. 10.

⁴⁴ Van Oostrom, p. 31.

⁴⁵ Van Oostrom, pp. 44–45.

⁴⁶ Gelre is known to be actively in the service of William I of Gelre 1380–1401/02 according to Wim van Anrooij, *Spiegel van ridderschap. Heraut Gelre en zijn ereredes*, *Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur in de middeleeuwen*, 1 (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 1990), pp. 62–66. The dates c. 1310–90, are incorrect (*VL*, vol. 2, col. 1186–87). See also van Oostrom’s entire chapter, ‘Bavaria Herald’.

⁴⁷ On Suchenwirt’s life and poems see W. van Anrooij’s book, Claudia Brinker ‘Von manigen helden gute tat’ *Geschichte als Exempel bei Peter Suchenwirt*, *Wiener Arbeiten zur germanischen Altertumskunde und Philologie*, 30 (Bern: Lang, 1987), and Van D’Elden’s book on Peter Suchenwirt cited above.

⁴⁸ Van D’Elden has compiled a chart outlining the almost identical structure of heraldic poems by Gelre and Suchenwirt, ‘The Ehrenreden of Peter Suchenwirt and Gelre’, *Beiträge*, 97 (1975), 88–101, (pp. 92–93). It must be noted, however, that the genre is older than the careers of either of these two men.

Gelre is not attested at any court before 1379.⁴⁹ Based on van Anrooij's dating and identification of several heralds, it is more likely that Gelre learned of Suchenwirt's poetry at The Hague.⁵⁰

This as yet unpublished reference to Suchenwirt fills a gap in his biography. It is not known how long Suchenwirt was connected with Straubing since he appears in the Bavaria-Holland accounts only once. According to the entry, Suchenwirt is sent to Hungary on an errand and is given an amount for fabric that is probably to be a new livery or special outfit for his appearance at the royal court: *dem Suechenwirt umb die abentewer und umb iiii ellen tuchs da man in gein Vngarn sant xiiii s.d.* (to Suchenwirt for the *abenteuer* and 4 ells of cloth because he is being sent to Hungary, 14 shillings in deniers; fol. 99^v). Since he had already spent time in Hungary at the court of King Louis I, and had composed an encomium to him in 1356, it seems likely that he would perform well as an emissary for the Bavaria-Holland court. Although this entry was made in either 1370 or 1371, it is nevertheless conceivable that he served the Straubing dukes for about four to five years. He then still had ample time to make contacts in Vienna by 1372 and move into Habsburg service by 1377 under the aegis of Duke Albrecht III of Austria.

A talented poet-performer or 'master speaker', he styled himself a *gernder man*⁵¹ in his poetry, and so he appears to fit the pattern of an itinerant poet-performer who found domestic employment for periods of time because of his many skills. To a great extent, the variety of encomia and political commentary in his poetry straddles the boundary between the didactic-political songs and declamatory poems so that it is legitimate to call him a poet-minstrel. Suchenwirt displays for us the necessary versatility across genres. Rarely can we put together enough details to flesh out the accounts and discover such versatility. Suchenwirt appears to have cultivated good relations with King Louis of Hungary and other lords and patrons. Therefore, it is likely that he, like other singers, served their hosts in a number of private or political missions.⁵² Between 1358 and 1365 he composed panegyrics for some people who

⁴⁹ Because the poetry of Gelre and Suchenwirt follows the same formula extremely closely as demonstrated by Van D'Elden, the question has been raised whether these two had actually met, 'Ehrenreden', pp. 100–01. Being able to place Suchenwirt at the Bavaria-Holland court now makes such a meeting and collaboration somewhat more likely but remains far from proven.

⁵⁰ Van Anrooij, p. 66.

⁵¹ The expression *gernder* defines itinerant didactic-political singers (*Spruchdichter*) and is discussed in Chapter 6.

⁵² Others have also suggested the same about Walther von der Vogelweide. Wolfgang Mohr had early on suggested that itinerant singers could be hired for special, confidential missions, 'Zu den Atze-Sprüchen Walthers von der Vogelweide und zu den persönlichen, politischen und anekdotischen Hintergründen mittelalterlicher Zeitdichtung', in Wolfgang Mohr, *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, 2 vols (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1983), vol. 2, pp. 185–208 (p. 193). Scholz concurs, 'biderbe', p. 321.

were politically in opposition to the Habsburgs. The fact that these poems did not prevent his later employment in Vienna speaks for his diplomatic abilities. The experience gained while travelling and his ability to win the confidence of princes at home and abroad made him a good choice as emissary for Bavaria as well. The very qualities that make a performance successful will please both patrons and audiences. I suspect people like Liendel, Wenceslas's singer, and Suchenwirt were able to win the trust of their patrons and thus rise to a respected status at more than one court. Suchenwirt's success as speaker alongside singers means that genres were proliferating. But at the same time, the success of a performer was still determined by his individual artistry, ready wit, affability, reliability, and diplomatic skills.

The third court, the headquarters of the Teutonic Knights in Marienburg (Malbork) was located at the opposite end of the Holy Roman Empire. It makes for a good comparison with Straubing, because its accounts are just about contemporary. Marienburg was a wealthy, politically important court consisting of men with perhaps an occasional noble female visitor. As the gathering place and command centre for the Northern Crusade, it welcomed incoming knights, high-ranking personages, legates and messengers from all corners of Europe including Portugal, Holland, Sweden, Hungary, Russia, Poland, and all the princes of the Empire. The commandery opened its gates to travelling minstrels, most of whom remain nameless. Most certainly these new arrivals were a welcome complement to the grand master's own troupe making themselves useful in Marienburg and on the battlefield.

The records of the Teutonic Knights, the *Tresslerbuch* (1399–1409), are a treasure of information on the variety of situations in which money is dispersed and, therefore, on the multiple opportunities for earning money at all levels of minstrelsy. Performers listed here are of four types: the unattached wandering performers, the domestics travelling on their own circuit or on behalf of their master, the town and city minstrels from the immediate region, and finally, those who appear to be local amateurs. These amateurs do not come to the commandery; they are local peasants or students who pay their respects when the grand master tours the order's land holdings. Often it is very difficult to distinguish between professionals and amateurs, just as it is between alms and payment for performance, for we are rarely told whether a performance occurred. In addition, the amounts given do not always signify type or quality of performance, but rather, tend to reflect the status of the recipient.⁵³

We find new terms here, too. By far the most frequent term is 'minstrel' whereas speakers and singers are very few. An example from 1 July 1403 shows that

⁵³ Hartmut Boockmann has analyzed the evidence for performers and reached similar conclusions, 'Spilleute und Gaukler in den Rechnungen des Deutschordens-Hochmeisters', in *Feste und Feiern im Mittelalter. Paderborner Symposion des Mediävistenverbandes*, ed. by Detlef Altenburg, Jörg Jarnut, Hans-Hugo Steinhoff (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1991), pp. 217–27.

'minstrel' is the favoured all-purpose term: ($\frac{1}{2}$ farthing given to minstrels with flutes on Sunday before Margaret, 255).⁵⁴ I list the classes of performers here with their frequency of occurrence: *spillute* (minstrels, 33); *pfifer* (piper or shawm player, 14); herald, 10; *lytsprecher*, *sprecher* (speaker or singer, 6); *fideler* (fiddler, 6); *trumper* (trumpeter, 6); *trompeler* (drummer, 3); *kokeler* (juggler, entertainer, 4); *tumeler* (acrobat or possibly drummer, 3); *senger* (singer, 1); *basuner* (trumpeter or horn player, 1);⁵⁵ *gernder* (itinerant performer, 1). Performances at court occurred about every two weeks in 1399. I count fifteen over the course of the entire year in 1401, significantly fewer than in Straubing. Periodically the entries mention chaplains, students, maidens, and children explicitly as having sung, but it is unlikely that they are professionals. In sum, the generic references to minstrels far outnumber any other type of performer. In Marienburg there are slightly more trumpeters and drummers than in Straubing, and that would point to the concerted military activities of the Teutonic Knights.

Just as Liebel is the foremost minstrel with special obligations in Straubing, the grand master has Pasternak, his chief minstrel. Pasternak exercises his power to remunerate itinerant entertainers and messengers as they pass through. He is issued money with specific instructions whenever performers are to be remunerated. In December 1399 some type of festival must have been held because on the 9th he was given 16 gulden to pay 32 minstrels for their performance: *16 gelrelysche guldyn den spilluthen gegeben zum capitel, am distage noch senthe nichus tage; Pasternak nam das gelt und der spillute woren 32* (16 gulden of Gelderland given to the chapter for the minstrels on Tuesday after St Nicholas Day. Pasternak received the money and there were 32 minstrels, 41).⁵⁶ Pasternak thus performs the same functions as Liebel in Straubing. Having 32 minstrels together at one time is unique in the accounts and certainly highly exceptional for a court except when a grand feast is held, but the *Tresslerbuch* never identifies any such festivity. Nevertheless, given the information in the listings, it is reasonable to assume that Liebel and Pasternak as chief minstrels

⁵⁴ $\frac{1}{2}$ *fird*. den *spilluthen mit den floyten gegeben am sontage vor margarethe* (p. 255). I translate *firdung* as farthing, a term that designated one fourth of a larger monetary unit. W. Carew Hazlitt calls it a *ferding* and is worth a fourth of a *thaler*. He describes it as a silver coin belonging to the currency of the Order of Livonia in *The Coinage of the European Continent: Middle Ages—Twentieth Century*, newly ed. by A. N. Oikonomides (Chicago: Ares, 1974), p. 199.

⁵⁵ The reason for the proliferation of terms translating as trumpets or horns has to do with the development of the instruments themselves. Initially long metal horns or straight trumpets (or Islamic trumpet) were favoured. Then in the fourteenth century with new techniques in metallurgy a number of other models, the slide trumpet and also the coiled trumpet, became popular especially with the nobility. See Bowles, 'Tower', pp. 96–99 and his explanation of the changing forms and materials in 'Unterscheidung', pp. 52–72.

⁵⁶ Pasternak receives money with a similar charge two more times, *Tresslerbuch*, p. 482, 160.

distribute payments because they are responsible for arranging a special performance ensemble utilizing the several talents of performers who come for a celebration.

At every great court it was the lord's duty to be generous, and the grand master of Marienburg was keenly aware of this obligation. On one occasion, the clerk inserted a delightful remark that illustrates well his public display of largesse. One day shortly before 25 July 1409 a few children and a street fiddler were frightened at the sight of the grand master as his entourage passed by. He gave them 4 scot pennies (*4 scot den kindern und fedeler dy vor dem meyster schrecketen*, 551) by which he exhibited his good will and generosity while still maintaining the distance his status required. The context conveys a sense of benevolent condescension that means that this particular act should be interpreted as alms or public generosity even though a fiddler is mentioned.

Like the grand master, every territorial ruler distributed alms and monies to display his wealth and power, but such displays sometimes belie the quotidian reality of court expenses. Meinhard II of Tyrol is known to be an exception because in his lifetime he accumulated wealth in land and money that his sons gradually depleted later. In Straubing, the duke was less frugal. Judging from the limited perspective of the accounts, Albrecht II seems to have spent beyond his income because he borrowed money from his father Albrecht, also from Emperor Wenceslas, and even from citizens of Regensburg. On one occasion he had to borrow money to be able to return home from The Hague.⁵⁷

Often artisans had difficulty extracting their pay from their lord. Most were paid only after their work was completed, and that could take half a year. People who were paid for regular services like Claus the veterinarian in Marienburg were paid once a year⁵⁸ and could only hope that payment would be made on time. Duke Albrecht II, for example, did not always pay his domestics promptly, for accounts note more than once that a payment made was actually overdue.⁵⁹ Without an acknowledged pay scale, it is unclear from the entries how the amount paid to each person was determined. Consequently, it is possible to assume that the court's finances at the time of a visiting minstrel's performance often governed the amounts paid out and whether any payments were deferred.⁶⁰ Since the contents of the lord's purse changed almost daily, the amounts paid to minstrels sometimes had little relation to the quality or popularity of their performances. In the case of domestic minstrels from other courts, if the status of the lord dictated the amount paid, then

⁵⁷ Helttampt, p. 107.

⁵⁸ *Tresslerbuch*, p. 528.

⁵⁹ *Haider dem pfeiffer geben eodem die an seinen sold des man im von Sand Gorgen tag vor her schuldig ward II lb.d.* (On the same day, paid to Haider the piper his salary that was owed to him on St George's Day 2 pounds in deniers, 24 April 1389, fol. 38^r).

⁶⁰ Bullock-Davies points out that the English kings also have an irregular payment record (*Menestrellorum*, 17–18).

the only place to adjust for a weak purse was to pay wayfarers less and postpone payment to one's own domestics.

Of the lists of expenditures for the three courts described, the Straubing court hosted the greatest number of minstrels. That it was occasionally in arrears puts the complaints of poet-singers like Walther, Meissner and Frauenlob in a new perspective. Their songs reiterate almost tirelessly that patrons were closefisted and paid poorly, if at all. The accounts now demonstrate that the vicissitudes of patrons' finances had a tangible impact on performers' lives. Scholars have lacked sympathy with didactic and political poet-singers and assumed they were greedy and complained overly much about their poverty and patrons' miserliness. Given the information in the account books, we must also consider that even a generous host may indeed have failed to provide now and then. Although we have little knowledge of complaints by artisans or labourers as they had little recourse to writing, few were better equipped than poet-minstrels to put their grievances into enduring words.

Characteristic of Straubing and Marienburg is the bustling traffic. Those listed as messengers and heralds I did not count among the performers although I strongly suspect that many did indeed perform. A great many people came through both courts even though travel was difficult, and people often ran out of money. The minstrels and heralds who travelled back and forth between all the major European courts were paid travel expenses by their own household but the amount, it appears, was rarely enough. On the one hand, the court bursar may have been too parsimonious in calculating costs; on the other, these messengers may have been expected to earn a bit at taverns along the way. Once the traveller arrived at the designated court, the host normally paid for the visitor's lodgings. Consequently, minstrels, messengers and other servants had to rely on their wits and talents when on the road because they often had to make up whatever funds they lacked during their trip. Sometimes a messenger was asked to seek out someone whose whereabouts was unknown which means that he could not anticipate how long he would be gone. Albrecht II's messenger, Merkl is just as savvy as a well-travelled performer who has the skill and initiative to track down information. He is sent 'to Reinprecht von Waldsee in Linz or wherever he may be found to discover and inform the duke when the Duke of Austria and his chamberlain are expected in Vienna'.⁶¹

Often household minstrels, heralds, and messengers were gone from the home court for a long time. In 1408 a messenger from Marienburg to Kraków was given a horse for the trip and was gone for five weeks.⁶² All the accounts reveal that the host must often cover a person's board even before they arrive, a certain indication that

⁶¹ *Dem Merkl Zerung zu Reinprecht von Waltsee gein lintz oder wo er in fund, das der meinen herrn verscrib, wo oder wenn man den von Osterrich und den hofmaister bey einander finden zu wienn*, Helttampt, p. 107.

⁶² *Tresslerbuch*, p. 486.

these messengers did not receive enough money from their lord to pay for room and board.⁶³ These messengers, be they labelled heralds or singers, must have also stopped and performed during the journey in order to earn additional money, while relying on the payments from their masters and hosts at every opportunity.

Heralds were minstrels. Some were poets or singers in the sense of Gelre and Meissner and others primarily instrumentalists. They were well equipped to perform at the various stops along the way to earn room and board. When heralds are given payment in Marienburg, even when they appear to stop over for one night only, they are paid because they perform. Support for this comes from the *Tresslerbuch*. According to a reference to heralds from Holland for 29 November 1406, two heralds are noted as having just returned from the Russian campaign, and each is given a mark of silver but no reason for payment is given.⁶⁴ It is not travel money because that is normally listed as *zerung*. Thus I suspect they performed in some way because normally the remuneration of one mark is the highest rate paid per person and is given only to the domestics of high-ranking nobles who entertain, deliver a letter, or perform some other specific task.

The military activities of the Commandery of Marienburg were a special attraction to unattached, wandering performers. Instrumentalists who accompanied armies or groups of knights arriving at Marienburg to join the Russian campaigns were most likely expecting to receive pay for their contribution in the military arena. For example, Swowen and his band of musicians went to battle along with the knights from Marienburg.⁶⁵ Both minstrels and heralds typically fulfilled the same important military duties. On the battlefield they sounded the start of the battle, maintained communication between groups, kept track of the troops, the wounded, and those taken prisoner. They also served as military messenger and interpreter, kept watch, and collected information about the enemy.⁶⁶ When free of other duties on the field, they even consoled the wounded with their melodies.⁶⁷

⁶³ May 1408: 3 *fird. vor Hannos von Myros des koniges boten von Behmen zu Danczk us der herberge zu losen* (3 farthings for Hanno of Myros, the king's messenger [coming] from Bohemia to Danzig, to pay his room expenses, p. 481).

⁶⁴ *Zwen herolden des herzogen von Hollant und des herzogen von Borgundien, als sie mit Wytolt us der Russchen reyse qwomen* (to two heralds of the duke of Holland and the duke of Burgundy, when they returned with Wytolt from the Russian campaign, *Tresslerbuch*, p. 407).

⁶⁵ Swowen and his group are mentioned several times in the *Tresslerbuch*, pp. 470, 481, 557, 578.

⁶⁶ On the duties of heralds in the military sphere in Dutch sources, see Ursula Peters, 'Herolde', 239–40, and in English sources see Constance Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum*, 42–44.

⁶⁷ Gerhard Eis has shown that minstrels eased people's suffering during painful medical procedures by recounting the lives of saints and martyrs, 'Spielmann und Buch als Helfer in schweren Stunden', in Gerhard Eis, *Vom Werden altdeutscher Dichtung. Literar-historische Proportionen* (Berlin: Schmidt, 1962), pp. 76–93.

The account books have shown us thus far that performers travelled a great deal, and that wayfaring didactic singers, many of whom remain nameless, were received at courts and paid for their presentations. They travelled great distances in order to perform. For example, Frauenlob, whom we met in the Tyrolean accounts, travelled all the way to Rostock in 1311 to attend a feast and tournament.⁶⁸ These didactic singers were also quite proud of their broad, inter-regional experience and boasted of their patrons and personal contacts frequently as a short excerpt from Kelin illustrates: *mir sint die besten kunt in Swâben und an dem Rîne! /In Beiern und in Ostervranken hân ich reinez leben!* (I know all the best people in Swabia and along the Rhine. In Bavaria and East Franconia I lead a magnificent life!)⁶⁹ It is worth noting that not just singers but speakers also chose to travel. Peter Suchenwirt the heraldic poet certainly did so and even called himself a wayfarer (*gernder*). This is in contrast to other herald-poets like Gelre who made a name for themselves by remaining within a single region and serving only one or two families during their entire career.

Our second insight is the pattern of multiple tasks assigned to domestics to achieve fulltime employment. They filled several practical needs: they watched for fire and other danger, played fanfares for the comings and goings of the master, travelled as envoy, acted as translator, entertained in times of sorrow and pain, and occasionally organized special entertainments at festivities. From the perspective of performers, however, the many odd jobs they undertook, whether as domestics or itinerants, were simply secondary yet essential because they supported the primary goal—to create opportunities for performing.

Mobility was essential to this goal. It gave minstrels knowledge of languages, countryside, roads, and borders. It also provided the opportunity to gain experience dealing with a great variety of people, customs, languages and regional attitudes. They clearly made full use of their mobility, for as we have noted, even household minstrels would come and go and not always be on call at court. Many performers were truly international. German minstrels even served in England in various capacities. English account books show that one Alemannus, a minstrel of Geoffrey of Lusignan in 1247, moved up in rank to join the household of King Henry III a

⁶⁸ I could give many examples but list only those names already encountered in the account books. Meissner traveled in Bohemia, Franconia, up to Brandenburg and south to the Tyrolean Alps. He wrote encomia to Ottokar II, Rudolf of Habsburg, Herdegen von Gründlach (Franconia) and Otto V of Brandenburg (*VL*, vol. 6, col. 322). Frauenlob and Regenbogen were familiar with Bohemia, Austria, Bavaria and even attended a grand knightly tournament and feast in Rostock in 1311 (*VL*, vol. 2, col. 866).

⁶⁹ Kelin II, 3 ll. 5–6 cited according to *Das Basler Fragment einer mitteldeutsch-niederdeutschen Liederhandschrift und sein Spruchdichter-Repertoire* (Kelin, *Fegfeuer*), ed. by Wolfgang von Wangenheim (Bern: Lang, 1972), p. 91. I discuss the way Kelin builds his reputation in his songs in Chapter 7.

year later.⁷⁰ A minstrel who proved himself trustworthy could be well rewarded as Perinus Teutonicus or Perin was. He was Henry's domestic, and the king liked him so well that in 1250 he gave him a house in London in St Laurence parish.⁷¹

Freedom of movement gave them access to information not only for subsistence, or to serve their patrons better, but also for improving their artistic abilities. Now and again performers need new audiences who are unfamiliar with their repertoire and have different expectations. Playing to diverse groups, since it demands greater versatility, gives them practice in adapting quickly to new performance conditions. These conditions include the physical shape and acoustics of the performance space and the unique mood and expectations of each audience. The challenge of appealing to new audiences hones their ability to capture the listeners' attention. And of course, it gives the performer an opportunity to present his renditions of new works and also some old pieces the listeners may have already experienced. By travelling, entertainers also expand their repertoire. Cities and courts serve as meeting places and provide them with the opportunity to see and hear others perform and to exhibit what they know as they take turns on centre stage.

The third advantage of travel is jamming. When performers get together, they perform. Singers vocalize, musicians play instruments, dancers and acrobats move their bodies, and actors play roles. Much of what happens is extemporaneous, but not haphazard. Jamming is a very sophisticated activity that fulfils several important functions. First of all, performers like to put on a show and what better situation than performing before a professional, sophisticated, and experienced group? Secondly, meeting other performers and playing with them is a serious learning experience. Each person presents part of his repertoire. From this pool of material each learns something: a new melody, song, technique, or style. Most exciting for performers is the opportunity to practice playing in ensemble. When a number of performers converge, they constitute a larger number of players and possibly share a greater variety of instruments than are normally available in daily routine. Different combinations of instruments create new interactions and performative dynamics. When singers come together, they are able to experiment with new and different kinds of accompaniment and also play off against each other. Playing in concert is another important feature of jam sessions. Performers may only infrequently be able to practice playing in a group and accommodating different, perhaps unfamiliar combinations of instruments and voices. It is also important for these people to hone their skills following a lead singer or player and improvising with him. This, too, is a skill that cannot always be practised unless the right combination of players is available. The only written documentation from account books indicating the

⁷⁰ See *Register of Royal and Baronial Domestic Minstrels 1272–1327*, ed. by Constance Bullock-Davies (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1986), p. 2.

⁷¹ Bullock-Davies, *Register*, p. 147.

practice of jamming and exchange of techniques comes from Mechelen. In 1328 and 1365 the town arranged a gathering of fiddlers from the area.⁷²

Finally, visiting a city or court could provide short or long-term employment. Scholars have considered this last to be the foremost consideration for minstrels although I doubt it. Without attributing to entertainers any romantic *Wanderlust*, it is clear that many, especially poet-singers, did not remain for long in what appears to us as a stable situation. Cities also had difficulty with minstrels who only remained on the job for a short time. There are two explanations for this. When performers changed jobs they may have been lured away by better conditions at another town or even at a court.⁷³ But we must also consider that minstrels were concerned with improving their performance opportunities at least as much as their economic security.⁷⁴

As we outline the employment pattern and complex of skills, and weigh them against the need to perform, a new picture of the performer's flexible lifestyle emerges. Now performance is the motivating factor rather than income. Mobility is not a characteristic of transients only. The skills acquired in travel dovetail with tasks needed at court. Our sources have indicated that minstrels and heralds worked as messengers, companions, and watchmen; they helped to identify and keep track of people in addition to providing entertainment. Diplomatic work and espionage can be detected in these sources as well. In fact, the passage cited from Chobham indicated, albeit in an accusatory manner, that minstrels did indeed 'snoop around' to gather information about individuals (Chapter 2).

It is well worth examining a well-administered and documented English royal court because English sources help substantiate an even broader range of minstrel activities than just outlined. Edward I's court in England offers itself because it includes far more extensive records of household expenses going back to the middle of the thirteenth century, that is, concurrently with the Tyrolean accounts.⁷⁵ Excerpts

⁷² Raymond van Aerde has listed from the town account books all references to musicians and activities they were involved in. The citations pre-1400 are sparse and give no context. *Musicalia. Notes pour servir à l'histoire de la musique, du théâtre et de la danse à Malines* (Mechelen: Dierickx-Beke, 1921), p. 4.

⁷³ Bowles, 'Tower Musicians', p. 93.

⁷⁴ Evidence from the city of Freiburg in Breisgau, collected by Antonia Harter-Böhm, shows that tower musicians often stayed at their job only a short time even when given the opportunity to settle. The documents date from the end of the fifteenth century, and are not directly applicable to our period. But even at that late a date when jobs were probably much more plentiful, the city had great difficulty keeping its town musicians for more than a few months at a time. Unless there were far more jobs than performers and bitter competition among cities, it is meaningful to conclude that the itinerant life appealed to many because it offered better performance opportunities, *Zur Musikgeschichte der Stadt Freiburg im Breisgau um 1500* (Freiburg/Br.: Wagnersche Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1968), p. 4.

⁷⁵ Constance Bullock-Davies is responsible for publishing the lists of minstrels in *Register*

from these records listing royal and baronial minstrels from 1272–1327 have been published as well as the rolls listing the preparations and expenses associated with King Edward I's grand courtly feast in 1306.

The English royal records are very much worth a comparison because they confirm as typical the activities indicated in the scantier German accounts. We find out how long some minstrels stayed on as domestics, that they moved from one household to another, that a minstrel sent as envoy stayed two to three months at the host court. That minstrel was Conrad Pefer or Fefer, the fiddler of Albrecht I the German king who sent him to the English king in the winter of 1305/6. He intended to stay through March and April of 1306. While in England his room and board was covered by his host, and when it was time to leave, his return expenses were also paid to him. Instead of departing, however, he stayed another month to attend the grand feast on the occasion of the knighting of Edward I's son.⁷⁶ Conrad may have supplied information about the German court to Edward, and may also have stayed for reasons of espionage. A lengthy stay like Conrad's allowed him to collect information from court domestics and learn to identify by sight many of the king's barons. Of course, we cannot know what Conrad's purpose was, or why certain minstrels were hired, stayed several months, or why they dropped out of the rolls. On occasion we can discern that the ruler made use of a minstrel's knowledge for political and military purposes when he needed information from foreign or distant regions. The records of Edward I's court, especially those of the feast of 1306, disclose how espionage and information gathering could be organized using performers.

The knighting and feast in honour of Edward, Prince of Wales and approximately three hundred other aspirants was held on Pentecost, 22 May 1306 in London.⁷⁷ The preparations and expenses for this feast illustrate clearly the connection between politics and merry-making, conviviality and war. This grand feast was a major political and cultural event intended to procure support for the king's planned Scottish campaign. The immediate cause was Robert Bruce's murder of John Comyn (10 February 1306) and his coronation as king of Scotland just five weeks later.⁷⁸ Edward I's preparations for war began immediately. The king wanted to rebuild his depleted army by knighting as many young men as possible together with his son. The domestic minstrels, especially the king's chief minstrels played a key role in the entire execution of the huge affair.

The great influx of people, the family members of each aspirant, their servants, the numerous high-ranking invited guests, and their entourage required lodgings in London. To accommodate such crowds, fifty carpenters were brought in to erect the

and the records for King Edward I's grand feast held in London in 1306 in *Menestrellorum*.

⁷⁶ Bullock-Davies, *Register*, pp. 60, 146.

⁷⁷ Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum*, p. xxi.

⁷⁸ Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum*, pp. x–xiii.

necessary buildings and tents. Since the feast was a costly venture, the support of royal subjects was also needed to finance it. Edward I sent out notices that he would require provisions and asked the representatives of districts, towns and cities as well as archbishops, bishops and abbots to contribute money towards the costs. Others were told to contribute in kind, and they gave dozens of swans, peacocks, pheasants, one thousand hens, boars, fish, and the utensils needed to prepare and serve the sops, meats, custards, breads and wafers.⁷⁹ Messengers were also sent out to invite the guests and summon the minstrels. The king's chief minstrels or heralds, the *reges haraldorum*, were the masters of ceremonies.⁸⁰ They worked with newly arrived minstrels, created ensemble performances and interludes, directed the entertainment, noted attendance, ushered guests, and saw to it that the entire affair ran smoothly.⁸¹

On the day of the knighting, the ritual followed the customary pattern: mass, knighting, procession, and banquet with accompanying choreographed spectacle or interlude. The political goal was not forgotten during the knighting ceremony. Part of the ceremony requires that the knights vow to perform a worthy act. Edward I is said to have vowed to avenge the murder of John Comyn and the Bruce's insult to the English crown. All the newly girded knights then vowed with him.⁸² Next came the entertainment; it was orchestrated so that it was performed between the courses of the meal. The kings of minstrels produced interludes to suit the particular occasion and also performed in them.⁸³ Afterwards the king presented his gift of two hundred marks to the chief minstrel, Robert Parvus, who then distributed the largesse.⁸⁴

King Edward I ran a well-organized court geared to maintaining control over lands and subjects in peace and in war. Each of his kings of heralds came from a different part of the country. Originally they began their careers as itinerants and squires-at-arms serving at manor houses in their own natal region. The double function of performer and squire-at-arms is not unusual since these guards often played instruments or sang to keep themselves and the other watchmen awake. It also develops out of the trust established between the performer and the lord. Even painters and other artists could be made sergeants-at-arms once they achieved a

⁷⁹ Most of our information about the preparations and the festivities are found in the King's Wardrobe accounts and Payrolls in Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum*, p. xxviii.

⁸⁰ Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum*, p. 40.

⁸¹ The truth is that despite all the expertise of the king's minstrels, the affair did not run at all smoothly. The throng was so great at Westminster Abbey that one aspirant was crushed to death and two others fainted, Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum*, p. xxxvii.

⁸² Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum*, p. xxxvii.

⁸³ Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum*, p. xxxv.

⁸⁴ Bullock-Davies gives ample evidence from several records that having the chief minstrel distribute payment to the others is just as much standard procedure at English courts as it is at German ones, *Menestrellorum*, pp. 12–13.

relationship of trust.⁸⁵ Already in 1306, Edward's kings of heralds were firmly attached to the royal court; they nevertheless spent a good deal of time in their own region of the country. This meant that each knew the dialect, the heraldic figures of the knights, the genealogies of the families and extent of their land holdings, and the terrain of his particular region well.⁸⁶ In fact, these kings divided Britain among them: there was a king of the Scottish border, of Scotland, of Wales, of the Midlands, and of the South.⁸⁷ Clearly, such information about each section of the country was invaluable to the king on a military campaign, for purposes of renewing fiefs, and keeping track of vassals' lands in peacetime.

It is necessary to point out here that 'herald' and 'minstrel' are used interchangeably in English sources where 'herald' is already in use by the end of the thirteenth century. It is also interchangeable with 'minstrel' in German vernacular sources. Before the term came into use, those who performed these functions were called 'minstrels'. Understandably then, Edward I's kings of heralds are also called *reges menestrellorum*. In the Rolls, Robert Parvus, the senior king of minstrels, was also squire-at-arms and the king's trumpeter during his forty-four years of service.⁸⁸ He and the others were trusted and well paid men at the king's court where their duties were many: they divided their time between military affairs, messenger assignments, entertainment activities, and tournaments (when they were legal).⁸⁹ Quite telling is the fact that at the time of Edward I's feast, tournaments were prohibited in England, and yet the title of herald and *rex haraldorum* occurs with increasing frequency in the English documents. The obvious conclusion is that the duties of the minstrel and herald offices are basically the same.⁹⁰

Since the king was actively preparing for war in May 1306, 'king' Caupenny was particularly important. He was Edward I's king of Scotland and had joined the

⁸⁵ During the reign of Henry III, Walter of Durham was designated 'King's Sarjeant and Painter' in 1271, Martindale, p. 35.

⁸⁶ Bullock-Davies goes so far as to call them secret agents, *Menestrellorum*, p. 43.

⁸⁷ Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum*, p. 43.

⁸⁸ He appears repeatedly in several rolls from 1277–1321 under the heading 'minstrels', Bullock-Davies, *Register*, pp. 139–144 and *Menestrellorum*, p. 159.

⁸⁹ On the dates and reasons for the prohibition of tournaments in England, see Juliet Barker and Maurice Keen 'The Medieval English Kings and the Tournament', in *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter, Beiträge zu einer vergleichenden Formen- und Verhaltensgeschichte des Rittertums*, ed. by Josef Fleckenstein (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), pp. 212–28.

⁹⁰ This is supported by Richard Rastall, 'The Minstrel Court in Medieval England', in *A Medieval Miscellany in Honour of Professor John Le Patourel*, ed. by R. L. Thomson (Leeds: Leeds Literary and Philosophical Society, 1982), pp. 96–105 (p. 100) and Anthony R. Wagner, *Heralds and Heraldry in the Middle Ages: An Inquiry into the Growth of the Armorial Function of Heralds* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), Chapter 11.

household about 1291. As a Scotsman he was familiar with the terrain and roads, and recognized members of the noble families. Caupenny, like the other kings, was also responsible for military intelligence that would be invaluable to Edward in his campaign against the Bruce.

Typically information went from the sovereign to his subjects, and it is well-known that his heralds and minstrels made the proclamations. However, we must also consider that it was just as important for information to pass from subjects to rulers. Kings and territorial rulers need to know what the people below them think and say. They need informants at all levels, and minstrels, especially the king's minstrels who hail from a particular region, can collect information about subjects' loyalties and activities. Their knowledge had a direct impact because minstrels and heralds were able to identify people by sight. The liege lord needed to identify the sons who come to be knighted, or to have their fief renewed upon the father's death, and to settle property boundary and inheritance disputes within his territory. Accurate identification of individuals was a serious issue because the English king, the Holy Roman Emperor, or a German prince with vast estates might not see the heirs of his vassals often enough to recognize them. The work of confirming the identity of individuals and eliminating impostors was extremely important because impostors flocked to the courts when an inheritance was to be had.⁹¹ Nobles who established good relations with itinerants were often able to benefit from their espionage in a similar way. It is possible that unattached itinerants without livery or identification were in an even better position to sound out opinion and even dissent. Nobles might well have benefited from the confidence of another noble's minstrel. Liendel, King Wenceslas's singer went to Straubing two to three times a year, frequently enough to report back on the king's allies or to shift his allegiance to Albrecht II if he learned of the king's impending imprisonment in 1394. Hence any of these minstrels could become the ruler's *vox populi*.

The court feast was the exceptional event that temporarily merged peacetime and wartime activities, and so it makes sense that minstrels (or heralds) presided at such festivities. It was the minstrels' responsibility to ensure protocol, announce guests, usher people to their specified places, and note which guests (vassals) failed to appear. They produced and directed the entertainment for the banquet, played fanfares and dance music, recited encomia, sang of brave deeds, knew the blazons of all the knights so that they could identify all those who attended the feast and participated in the tournament. In short, they kept track of people and ejected those who did not belong. The job of tracing and identifying people should not surprise us, because it was just as important in peace as in war. When minstrels accompanied a

⁹¹ Most impostors were eventually discovered but when in 1348 Margrave Waldemar of Brandenburg claimed to have returned after twenty-nine years, he was accepted because he greatly augmented the German King Karl IV's power base. No one then or since has been able to prove or disprove his identity, Helmut Boockmann, *Stauferzeit und spätes Mittelalter. Deutschland 1125–1517* (Berlin: Siedler, 1987), p. 250.

military campaign, their duties were essentially the same—to keep account of friend and foe. This required recognizing blazons, listing troops for the muster, and collecting people in proper order for battle by means of trumpet and drum. In fact, the field trumpeter, mentioned in the year 1000 is the earliest listed performer in the extant German accounts and demonstrates just how important a job it was. Even when households or manors had little funds they always kept at least one trumpeter.⁹² With all these duties, it is clear that the performing arts were ancillary except at a grand festival, whereas their information gathering was essential.

There were two methods of establishing and maintaining the loyalty of minstrels at court: ample payment and a relationship of trust. In order to retain reliable heralds and minstrels in the household, it is necessary to give them special gifts publicly in a ritualized manner in payment for their performance at festive, public events. (See Chapter 6 on public gift-giving.) Their loyalty is essential because they gather information constantly and have access to all parts of the palace. Then, when they travel to other courts, they are in a position to reveal information damaging to their previous host. Yet if they are loyal, they can gather information helpful to him. According to this same principle, those minstrels who are not on wages must also be treated well, for they may easily become privy to information that could be damaging to the family or court. Special gifts were given to exceptional performers like ‘the noble singer Damsel Adelaide of Hochusen, who, in 1394, travelled about with her *cokerelle* (probably a kind of serenade) and so moved the count [of Holland] that he presented her with twelve silver bowls’.⁹³

Likewise at the end of a grand banquet such as the one at the knighting of Prince Edward in London, the minstrels are rewarded according to protocol. The rolls recording this official remuneration list the king of heralds first:

To King Robert and certain other Kings of Heralds and also to other divers minstrels, for making their minstrelsy in the presence of the King and other nobles present at Westminster on Whitsunday of the current year; that is to say, on the day of the knighting of lord Edward, the King’s son, Prince of Wales, 200 marks, by gift of the lord Prince, by order of the King. —By the hand of master Walter Reynolds, Keeper of the same Prince’s Wardrobe, giving and distributing the money to them in the name of the Prince. —At London, 23 May 1306.⁹⁴

Just where this public remuneration takes place is not stated. It is clear, however, that great pains are taken to make sure everyone receives his due.⁹⁵

⁹² Pietzsch, *Fürsten*, p. 10.

⁹³ Van Oostrom, p. 34; see his note 84 on p. 34 in which he mentions that she might be the same lady who had an affair with the duke, and also p. 113.

⁹⁴ Cited from the Exchequer Records according to Bullock-Davies (*Menestrellorum*, 8).

⁹⁵ This example of public remuneration and those from Marienburg and Straubing establish a context for understanding songs about generosity and properly run courts discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

Normally payment is a straightforward, public transaction. In contrast, personal co-operation is based on intimate contact over a long period of time. For minstrels as for others providing services on an irregular basis, the intimate contact is equally important if not more important than payment. When a grand feast was held, the court became a great audition centre for minstrels who came from distant parts. If a performer appeared trustworthy and performed well, a good host would keep him on for a while. Caupenny was put on wages in just this way. He had come to court from Scotland for the wedding of Princesses Joan and Margaret in 1290 and was taken on soon afterwards.⁹⁶ In a similar manner Edward I kept Cunrad and Henry, German fiddlers (*gigours*) for seven years (1300–06) as members of the household.⁹⁷ Foreign performers like these two knew the languages, customs, politics, the terrain, location of castles, supply routes in foreign parts, but will provide this information only if co-operation is worth their while.

Just what the basis was for loyalty and co-operation between master and servant is difficult to estimate or verify. It was very probably the special ability of many minstrels to entertain that gained them the trust and intimacy of high-ranking lords because they would be called in to the private quarters at times of illness, anxiety, stress or boredom. The comparison with the English feast of 1306 illustrates more clearly than the German accounts alone the reasons for treating household and wayfaring minstrels well: they are found in the private services performers provide. They entertain members of the court in intimate situations, and they collect information about various members of the court and several other courts. These information-gathering tasks can be performed only by trusted and experienced ministers. Of course, they must also be circumspect. Those who mounted the night watch and signalled the dawn were in a position to be engaged by lovers to wake them just as described in dawn songs. A dawn song by Heinrich von Frauenberg (fl. 1250–1300) is interesting to us because the watchman is particularly discrete towards the lovers, yet not at all shy about mentioning payment for his service:

Er sprach 'frouwe,
 swer soldet mir den lîp,
 swenne ez taget, ich singe iu mê.
 Ist der ritter
 hie inne, frouwe,
 vermîde ich danne mîner ougen schouwe,
 sô wirt iur fröide bitter'. ll. 14–19

⁹⁶ Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum*, p. 43.

⁹⁷ Bullock-Davies cites several accounts and Rolls attesting to the presence of Cunrad and Henry at Edward's court from 1300 to 1306, *Register*, pp. 37–38, 68–69.

[He said, 'Lady whoever pays for my keep, when the dawn arrives, I will sing again for you. If the knight is inside, then I shall avert my eyes, or your joy shall turn bitter'.]⁹⁸

Whether this *Minnesang* reflects actual events is unimportant here. I wish to point out the likelihood of such a scenario. Those who sang or piped to awaken the castle or town dwellers certainly had occasion to see things at twilight that the darkness of night was intended to hide. Those who did not wish to be discovered found it useful to be on good terms with the watchmen, as in the above poem.

Like the example of Caupenny and Liendel, trust of the kind intimated in dawn songs is based on long-term, close association between an individual and his or her minstrel. Minstrels are able to perform these services because they have a unique combination of knowledge, skills and mobility. Therefore, whatever their social rank, some performers enjoyed a privileged situation with certain individuals and had to be treated with great care. Thus the minstrel, whether at the rank of *rex* or not, would be a valuable resource at court, and it would behoove any lord to maintain trusted minstrels for reasons beyond the obvious desire for entertainment and public display.

Once we understand that minstrels, heralds, singers, instrumentalists and other entertainers exhibit a common set of skills employable at a large court, we can recognize these qualifications to be precisely the ones that give them success in performance as well. How exactly do these duties complement a minstrel's performance skills? Performance is about getting the attention of strangers, of people in all ranks of society. Performing well requires knowing how to put strangers at ease, of being able to enthrall a group of people so they become absorbed in the show. The goal of every performance is to create the intensity that transports an audience, which creates a temporary unity of individuals. To achieve intimate rapport with a group, performers, especially speakers and singers, need to use the language, or better yet, the dialect and specific speech patterns of their audience. Drawing on local events and attitudes in a performance would make a minstrel popular. (Comedians always use this strategy.) The way to create performance intensity is to synchronize with the audience by establishing a clear rhythm in breath, language, melody, and body movement that builds tension. This intensity then controls audience-performer dynamics (see Chapter 3).

A second consideration is that performers need changing audiences. They become so accustomed to one group that they anticipate moods and expectations of their listeners, and that undercuts a good bit of the energy and challenge of the stage. Travel either for their patron or for their own benefit brings them to new audiences that pose unexpected challenges. No matter how difficult travel may have been, it

⁹⁸ Karl Bartsch and Wolfgang Golther, eds. *Deutsche Liederdichter des zwölften bis vierzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Behr's Verlag, 1901), str. xxiii, ll. 14–19, pp. 135–36, cited hereafter as Bartsch–Golther.

maintained for performers a level of excitement. Knowing how to find wealthy patrons required resourcefulness and their own intelligence network. When they charmed their way into castles and other venues, they made use of the same interpersonal and performance skills as they did to attract and captivate an audience.

Women Performers

Wherever one looks, in account books, law books, city records and ordinances, among the numerous references to performers, women are noticeably scarce as are contemporary studies on women minstrels.⁹⁹ Understandably, the records of the Teutonic Knights mention no performances by professional women. But women most assuredly performed professionally in Germany as they did elsewhere. The German speaking areas never developed the customary division of *trobador*—*joglar*, the nobly born composer of song and the lesser born performer, both of whom had professional female counterparts typically in Provence and Spain.¹⁰⁰ It is, therefore, all the more important to note those few women who are mentioned in German speaking areas. Some were well known to the court they frequented and were very much appreciated. We have already met Adelaide of Hochusen who received twelve silver bowls for her singing at The Hague.

To discover another individual with an identity, it is necessary to turn to English records. The royal princes were entertained by the acrobatic dancing of Matilda Makejoy, called a *saltatrix* in the rolls. During the Christmas holidays 1296 she was paid for ‘making her vaults in the presence of Edward, the King’s son [...] Ipswich’.¹⁰¹ She also appeared at Edward’s knighting in 1306, and on Midsummer Day 1311/12, she made ‘her minstrelsy in the presence of the two young princes,

⁹⁹ The only general study devoted to women minstrels is by Walter Salmen. He surveys a vast period from c. 500 to 1600 but since sources are few, much of what he offers is speculation, *Spielfrauen im Mittelalter* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2000). Most of the scholarship on women performers focuses on France and Spain, and then primarily on singers, many of who are not professionals. The following studies do contain a very few references to professional women: Maria Coldwell, ‘Jongleresses and Trobairitz: Secular Musicians in Medieval France’, in *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150–1950*, ed. by Jane Bowers and Judith Tick (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), pp. 39–61; Yvonne Rokseth, ‘Les Femmes musiciennes du XIIe au XIVe siècle’, *Romania*, 61 (1935), 464–80.

¹⁰⁰ On Occitanian women performers and the concept of *joglaressa* see Rokseth and especially the excellent study by Angelika Rieger, ‘Beruf: *Joglaressa*. Die Spielfrau im okzitanischen Mittelalter’ in *Feste*, ed. by Altenburg, pp. 229–44 in which she elaborates in the Romance area on my own findings. Rieger also discusses the poetesses in *Trobairitz. Der Beitrag der Frau in der altokzitanischen höfischen Lyrik. Edition des Gesamtkorpus* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1991). See her introduction, pp. 1–27.

¹⁰¹ Bullock-Davies, *Register*, p. 108.

Framlingham'.¹⁰² Thus she was not a domestic but was certainly known to the household, trusted with the children, and brought in to perform as occasion demanded over a course of fourteen years. Her dancing may have been the acrobatic kind accompanied by music as the comment on her vaults suggests. There were apparently two types or styles of dancing in twelfth and thirteenth century pictorial representations. The one was a sedate movement associated with court dances and the other was acrobatic with flips and backbends typically performed by professionals.¹⁰³ Nothing in the rolls describes Matilda's presentation in detail, but as a professional, she may have walked on her hands in a manner similar to the images of female dancers in any number of images depicting Salome's dance.¹⁰⁴ Unfortunately, no more is known about her life except that she lived at the periphery of the royal court and was called upon when needed.¹⁰⁵

The German accounts mention women, but only once is a woman mentioned by name. Alhaid appears in the Tyrolean accounts twice in the year 1300 and is called a *figellatrix* (fiddler) but her performance is not noted. Alhaid is well known to the court. She apparently lives in Meran and is married to Bawaro who is also employed on occasion by the court. Once she is given 25 pounds for her husband and another time 4 pounds 8 shillings for someone named Guglerio.¹⁰⁶ Payments are not for her

¹⁰² Bullock-Davies, *Register*, p. 109.

¹⁰³ Hugo Steger gives pictorial examples of the two styles of dancing, recognizing that both styles depicted are based on actual practice. He also demonstrates that the images of Salome between 900 and 1300 reflect the changing dance practices of each period, 'Der unheilige Tanz der Salome. Eine bildsemiotische Studie zum mehrfachen Schriftsinn im Hochmittelalter', in *Mein ganzer Körper ist Gesicht: Groteske Darstellungen in der europäischen Kunst und Literatur des Mittelalters*, ed. by Katrin Kroll and Hugo Steger (Freiburg/Br.: Rombach Verlag, 1994), pp. 131–70 (pp. 138–68).

¹⁰⁴ Bullock-Davies compares Matilda's performance to the dancer in the French story of the 'Tumbler of Notre Dame' but that text is over one hundred years earlier than the English accounts (*Menestrellorum*, 56–57). For several pictorial examples of dancers, especially Salome, see Steger's article, 'unheiliger Tanz'. Torsten Hausamann's large study provides the background for and describes the iconography of Salome's dance depicted in both sacred and secular contexts, in *Die tanzende Salome in der Kunst von der christlichen Frühzeit bis um 1500. Ikonographische Studien* (Zürich: Juris, 1980). Unfortunately, the copy of the book I saw did not have the images. See also Gabriele Busch's study of solo dancing, *Ikonographische Studien zum Solotanz im Mittelalter*, Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft, 7 (Innsbruck: Helbling, 1982).

¹⁰⁵ English registers list other dancers, but they are apparently men according to Bullock-Davies, *Register* p. 38; they also mention two groups of women singers, a group of seven in 1303 and a troupe of four in 1332 but without offering any additional information, *Register*, p. 191.

¹⁰⁶ *Bawaro, marito Alheidis fingellatrixis lb xxv and Alhaidi fingellatrici in Merano pro Guglerio lb iiii. Sol. viii.* I cite according to Schönach, p. 175, who lists her as *fingellatrix*, but it certainly looks like a misreading of the text, and I read it as *figellatrix*.

services. An important possibility is that a division of labour existed between men and women performers, and that Alhaid, who was not an itinerant, may have performed only on specific informal occasions or perhaps before women only, as was typical for women in the villages of central Europe even into the early twentieth century. In other contexts we know that women performed in public together with men or solo.¹⁰⁷ Salmen claims women were prohibited from playing certain instruments like trumpets and shawms and from performing in a number of public venues, for example on the street, and in religious processions.¹⁰⁸

Women's performance was not limited in all spheres, however. From Wolfger von Erla's accounts we know that professional female singers performed before prelates. He listened to them play in a concert on four different occasions in Italy and in Germany in 1204.¹⁰⁹ Since Wolfger's accounts cover only a short period of his travels, it is not clear whether or how frequently he normally listened to women minstrels. How well these women are paid is very difficult to calculate. The amounts given them are equal to or higher than those received by men minstrels in Wolfger's accounts. The problem is that we are not told how many in a group and so we do not know what each person received.

Other accounts list wayfarers without name or type of performance. On 8 September 1302, women *vielle* or fiddle players from Württemberg performed in Tyrol and were paid 15 pounds although we do not know how many shared this amount.¹¹⁰ The Straubing accounts have two entries listing women minstrels (*varendfrawl*) in 1392 but for no other year. On 21 April 1392, two women were paid 6 deniers, and on 29 June three women received 16 deniers.¹¹¹ Payments to women in Bavaria appear to be at the low end of the pay scale. A handsome payment is one pound, which is the highest rate that some minstrels and heralds receive. It equals the sum that is given household messengers to cover expenses one way when they are sent from Straubing to Holland. The king's brother's minstrel and the

¹⁰⁷ We conclude this from Wolfger's accounts and from several images showing both a man and a woman performing. Most frequently the man is accompanying a female dancer with his instrument.

¹⁰⁸ Salmen, *Spielfrauen*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁹ In Italy: Ferrara, 18 April 1204: *cantatrici v sol. mezanorum* (5 solidi of Padua to women singers); Siena 25 April: *cantatrici et duobus ioculatoribus vii sol. et vj den. sen.* (to women singers and two minstrels, 7 solidi and 6 deniers of Siena, Heger 93). Next Wolfger heard women in Bolzano: *ioculatrici dim. tal. veron.* (A Veronese taler to women minstrels) and Regensburg: *ioculatricibus iiii sol.* (4 solidi to women minstrels), cited according to Heger, p. 96.

¹¹⁰ *In nativitate sancte Marie vigellatrici de Wirtenberch lb. xv.* (On the birthday of St Mary, to women fiddle players 15 pounds), Schönach, p. 176.

¹¹¹ *Zwain varendenfrawl xii amberger "facit vi d"* (to two itinerant minstrel women, 12 coins of Amberg, that makes 6 deniers, fol. 118^r); *Eodem die drein varenden frawlen xvi d.* (on the same day to three itinerant minstrel women 16 deniers, fol. 134^r).

bishop of Prague's fiddlers receive 60 deniers each. In 1390 an unnamed lutenist is given 72 deniers and an unnamed *vagus*, a speaker with a child receives 36 deniers and another unnamed itinerant performer also 36 deniers. In contrast, at the lowest end of the pay scale, alms handed out are 3 or 4 deniers. Thus women appear to have been paid relatively poorly in Straubing. Why this was the case remains unclear except for the fact that performers were often paid according to their patrons' status.

Municipal records yield even less information about women. City ordinances list only those outsider minstrels who are to be regulated. That women were not welcome in Strasbourg as performers is clear from a thirteenth century regulation that limits the number of men performing at a wedding and completely prohibits women minstrels at this event.¹¹² These records prove that women performed in cities and towns, but we never discover whom they might be or how many there were. Women appearing in tax and other records are often listed under their husband's name and thus it cannot be determined whether they are performers.

Official Church texts and moral treatises written by clergy typically associate minstrel women with prostitutes. That association is not shared by others, however. In account books and city ordinances the two are not equated. If a city council did make such an association, it is not discernible from the records. Instead, the prohibitions placed on male and female entertainers often stem from a desire to curb luxury spending and protect municipal minstrels from competition. Towns regulating prostitutes do not explicitly connect these women with performers. However, it is also important to note that a great deal of the protectionism in cities was purposely directed against women in all trades probably as early as the thirteenth century.¹¹³

In sum the sources do not allow us to distinguish between men beggars who played on street corners and respected men performers, and consequently, and consequently we cannot distinguish clearly between women minstrels and

¹¹² *Ad nuptias sponsales non maneant in mensa nisi octo viri et octo femine ab utraque parentela invitati equaliter, et quator jocolatores viri et non femine.* (No more than 8 men and 8 women, from both families are permitted at a wedding dinner and only 4 minstrel men and no [minstrel] women) cited according to Martin Vogeleis, *Quellen und Bausteine zu einer Geschichte der Musik und des Theaters im Elsaß 500–1800* (Strasbourg: Le Roux, 1911), pp. 41–42. The expression *jocolatores viri et femine* is interesting. Since both masculine and feminine forms of *jocolator* are available, the phrase suggests to me that minstrels were primarily thought of as men.

¹¹³ Although not directly applicable to this study, Merry Wiesner's article on women's employment in cities 1400–1750 demonstrates that city statutes often limited women to domestic work and expelled them if they attempted to find other types of employment, 'Having her own Smoke. Employment and Independence for Singlewomen in Germany, 1400–1750', in *Singlewomen in the European Past, 1250–1800*, ed. by Judith M. Bennett and Amy M. Froide (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 192–216. Lisa Bitel corroborates this as a general trend all over Europe pre-1200, *Women in Early Medieval Europe, 400–1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

prostitutes. Certainly many women performed both functions, but many others did not.

To be sure, the account books are not inclusive and sometimes failed to enter money transactions. If omissions are random, then the percentage of women versus men listed as performing at court is relatively accurate. If my analysis is correct that the employment of minstrels was primarily for military and logistical duties and only secondarily for artistic performance and entertainment, then the profession is understandably male dominated. That is not to claim women were explicitly excluded because we have no evidence. Nevertheless, it offers one good reason as to why the trade itself would be unattractive to women.

The City: Vienna

As we have learned from the court accounts, men but not women performers found a panoply of options and opportunities for performance related work at court. Although cities are a completely different administrative and economic entity, their employment of minstrels hardly differed. They hired minstrels to satisfy similarly practical needs of defence.¹¹⁴ Consequently the jobs offered to minstrels gave them some performance opportunities outside of their practical commitments to the town council. Like the myriad tasks of minstrels at court, the major part of their work for the city had little to do with performance art. They applied their instruments to regulating the daily lives of city dwellers by sounding the hours and the occasional alarm, signalling with fixed melodies the closing of the gates at night and their opening in the morning, and blowing fanfares to summon the citizens for proclamations. Only occasionally were they free to perform outside that routine.

Social historians have not viewed minstrels from the performative perspective. They assume, instead, that performers naturally wished to avoid the hardships of marginality and travel, and as a result, they sought out towns and created

¹¹⁴ Several musicologists and historians have studied municipal documents related to town musicians in specific towns. See G. Pietzsch, 'Musik in Reichsstadt und Residenz am Ausgang des Mittelalters', *Jahrbuch für Geschichte der oberrheinischen Reichsstädte* (Esslingen Studien), 12/13 (1966/67), 73–99; Fritz Ernst (Basel); Walter Salmen, 'Quellen zur Geschichte "frömdler Spillute" in Nördlingen', *Die Musikforschung*, 12 (1959), 474–78; Burkhard Busse 'Eine Ordnung für die Spielleute aus dem Jahre 1343 in Wismar', *Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft*, 3 (1961), 67–69; Hermann Rothert, 'Die ältesten Stadtrechnungen von Soest', *Westfälische Zeitschrift*, 101/2 (1953), 161–77; Joseph. Mantuani, 'Die Musik in Wien', in *Geschichte der Stadt Wien*, ed. by Heinrich Zimmermann and Albert Starzer, 5 vols (Vienna: Holzhausen, 1907), vol. III/1, pp. 143–377. The following: Moser, Bowles ('tower'), and Heinrich Schwab, *Die Anfänge des weltlichen Berufsmusikertums in der mittelalterlichen Stadt*, Kieler Schriften zur Musikwissenschaft, 24 (Basel: Bärenreiter, 1982) studied German cities in general.

confraternities and guilds in order to gain protection and status before the municipal magistrates. I question the priorities and goals this thesis attributes to performers. The two-fold object of this section is to come closer to understanding minstrels' values by examining their living conditions and municipal duties, and by re-examining the guild thesis.

Proponents of the guild thesis claim that confraternities were the major step in the process by which performers in general established themselves in society. But this process has been drawn as linear and continuous.¹¹⁵ Ernst Schubert questions the way the thesis has been framed by pointing out that the impetus for regulating musicians came from the town councils and not the musicians themselves.¹¹⁶ Urban regulations, land registers and rent records have been used to evaluate performers' rights and living conditions and the contribution of the guilds.¹¹⁷ Both Page and Brandhorst claim that the gradual increase in the acceptability of secular poetry, song, and music raised the social acceptability of the performing minstrels themselves.¹¹⁸ Their argument assumes that a general increase in wealth increased the number of jobs for performers. By this means they link the eventual social inroads achieved to the proliferation and acceptance of secular artistic performance and production. Increased wealth among the nobility certainly allowed them to hire more minstrels, but as I have shown above, the purpose was not primarily entertainment. When cities hired minstrels, then they, too, had a much more practical purpose.

My review of most of these same urban records does not substantiate the guild thesis. Instead of constructing a composite picture with evidence from several cities as previous scholars have done, I first examine a single city—Vienna—in as much detail as possible, recognizing that the situation here may be unique. The purpose is to re-evaluate the thesis by establishing a greater context for the activities and organizations minstrels participated in. The terms are confusing. I use 'brotherhood' and 'confraternity' to mean primarily a religious organization. Brotherhoods in my study do not appear to have regulated the quality of performers, or had support for disabled performers. As the legal foundation and purpose of the brotherhoods change, they turn into guilds, whereas their names do not change. Consequently it is

¹¹⁵ This thesis has been put forth by almost everyone who has studied minstrels: Brandhorst, Faral, Hartung, Moser, Page, Peters, Salmen, Schreier-Hornung and Schwab, and Robert Lach, 'Zur Geschichte des musikalischen Zunftwesens', *Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien (philologisch-historische Klasse)*, 3 (1923), 3–36.

¹¹⁶ Schubert, pp. 133–38.

¹¹⁷ Moser, Peters, Schubert, and Bronislaw Geremek have all attempted to attribute increasing security and rights of minstrels to the founding of guilds but not confraternities. See especially Geremek's study of the poor in the Middle Ages, *Geschichte der Armut. Elend und Barmherzigkeit in Europa* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1991).

¹¹⁸ Page, *Owl*, pp. 28–31 and Brandhorst, p. 123.

very difficult to know when that transformation takes place. Vienna, it appears, was the first German city to have a brotherhood.

Scholars cite early brotherhoods in France, but they cannot prove that these organizations or confraternities were created with the goal of protecting minstrels. In the late twelfth century, the city of Arras had the earliest brotherhood, but as Peters has shown, it was established by the burghers for the purpose of organizing the annual municipal performances and for this reason also included performers.¹¹⁹ The next to be established was the 'Confrérie du Puy', 1229 in Valenciennes about which we know very little, and the third is Vienna, c. 1280–88.¹²⁰ A real surge in the founding of confraternities came in following century, and they were not all in large cities, as the theory would predict. The Paris 'Confrérie de St. Julien des Ménestrels' was established in 1331, the Alsatian Brotherhood was in existence by mid-century, the 'Pfeifferbruderschaft' of Basel by 1375, and the Riegel Brotherhood came shortly thereafter.¹²¹ A closer look at the origins of some of these brotherhoods indicates that the conditions under which they were established varied much more than has been recognized thus far.

What transpired in Vienna is completely unexpected because the story of the minstrels and their brotherhood begins at court. I hope to show that the St Nicholas Brotherhood of Minstrels in Vienna was not established by town musicians or wayfarers. In fact, the confraternity had less to do with the urban administration and municipal musicians than with the Habsburg dukes who helped rebuild the city and gave it a new charter at the end of the thirteenth century.

As we shall see, the inception of the Nicholas Brotherhood is closely connected to the fate of St Michael's parish church. Little written documentation on minstrels has survived. Fortunately that lacuna is compensated to a great extent by the archeological record of the city's physical and demographic pattern of growth. Vienna's kernel in the eleventh century encompassed the central portion bounded by the Graben and Rotenturmstrasse. During the twelfth century the city first expanded eastward and southward with the renovation of St Michael's, the building of St Stephen's as a parish church (by 1147), with the growth of the market town between Wollzeile and Fleischmarkt, and expansion across the old wall (Graben). At this time the city doubled in size as Duke Leopold VI the Glorious razed the old wall and began to build a new one farther out to encompass the newly rebuilt St Stephen's, the parish church of St Michael's, and to make room for the new castle, simply

¹¹⁹ Peters, *Literatur*, pp. 217–19.

¹²⁰ France is discussed in Peters, *Literatur*, p. 214 and Vienna in Egon Komorzynski, 'Die Sankt-Nikolausbruderschaft in Wien (1288 bis 1782)', in *Festschrift Wilhem Fischer*, ed. by Hans Zingerle, Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft, 3 (Innsbruck: Selbstverlag des Sprachwissenschaftlichen Seminars der Universität Innsbruck, 1956), pp. 71–74 (p. 72).

¹²¹ On confraternities in and around the Alsatian and Basel area, see Ernst, Harter-Böhm, Moser, Schulte, Schwab, and Vogeis.

called the *neue Burg*. The building enterprise he began was basically completed by 1221. In the south and west, various members of the textile industry including foreign merchants thus became part of the city. Leopold VI had his new castle built right against the new wall and a new gate, the Widmertor, installed right next to it. Leopold also had St Michael's modernized and enlarged making it appropriate for use as the parish church for his domestics.¹²² This new castle remained small and not fully completed until the Habsburgs took over construction and moved in during the early 1280s. (See map, 'Landmarks of Vienna', Appendix B.)

It is certainly no coincidence that Leopold VI in his building campaign began re-designing a number of churches including St Stephen's and constructing a new castle just inside the recently created southwestern district. These additions to the city expose a building strategy that gave the Babenberg dukes greater presence in Vienna proper at a time when their primary residence was in Klosterneuburg.

Before the expansion of St Michael's could be completed, a devastating fire broke out in the city on 30 October 1275, and destroyed the church as well as the parish records within, and so we cannot expect to have any documents on the Brotherhood before this date. The only part of the church that survived—and this is significant for our Brotherhood—was the adjacent chapel of St Nicholas that stood in the cemetery surrounding the church proper. This St Nicholas chapel was used for the next thirteen years (until 1288) when Duke Albrecht I, son of Rudolph of Habsburg subsidized the rebuilding of St Michael's. When the church was completed, the surviving statue of St Nicholas was moved into the church and the chapel torn down.¹²³ As we shall see, the recurrence of the date 1288 is striking for the fact that it connects the church to the earliest recorded memory of the Brotherhood. Thus the dates of the fire and rebuilding of the church explain the choice of Nicholas as patron and place the inception of the brotherhood in the period just before or during the rebuilding of St Michael's. In addition, the proximity of the church to the new castle shows that this parish church was most conveniently accessible to the duke's household servants. Given this layout we may assume that almost every domestic, including minstrels, was a member of that parish. Hence the physical data guide my thinking that the ducal domestic minstrels settled conveniently near the new castle and their designated parish church.

Just as settlements were built outside the earlier city ramparts, new settlements were established just on the other side of the wall where the new castle was located. One settlement was called 'Neuluke', another 'Brunnenluka' and a third 'Fudluka'; they were situated just outside the Widmertor.¹²⁴ Neuluka appears to have extended

¹²² Karl Oettinger, *Das Werden Wiens* (Vienna: Bauer, 1951), pp. 124–32.

¹²³ Karl Lind and W. Neumann, 'Kirchen ausser St. Stephan', in *Geschichte der Stadt Wien*, ed. by Heinrich Zimmermann and Albert Starzer, 5 vols (Vienna: Holzhausen, 1907), vol. III/2, pp. 499–556 (p. 520).

¹²⁴ Richard Müller, 'Wiens räumliche Entwicklung und topographische Benennungen vom Ende des XIII bis zum Beginn des XVI Jahrhunderts', *Geschichte der Stadt Wien*, ed. by

out on either side of the Widmertor and all the way to the Kärntnertor.¹²⁵ This convenient location, right next to the castle, is where we expect to find most of the minstrels, especially Habsburg court minstrels, for even while the city was growing rapidly in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, members of the same trade still tended to settle close to each other. (See map 'Distribution of Artisans' Appendix C.) The extant land registers, beginning 1370, confirm this. For the last three decades of the fourteenth century they list a number of performers who not only lived in Neuluke, but also owned houses. Most can be identified as Habsburg domestics, but a few minstrels in the service of other lords also owned dwellings there. But minstrels did not live exclusively in Neuluke. The land register lists them living primarily in two districts, either in centre city along the Graben and Wallnerstrasse area or just outside the new castle. Nevertheless, the greatest number of the household minstrels as well as several unattached performers resided close to each other in the Neuluke neighbourhood. (See maps, 'Location of Minstrels', Appendix D and 'List of Minstrels and Their Locations', Appendix E.)

How are we to imagine this outlying district? It is important to avoid any preconceived notions about what the minstrel community was like. Schubert, who is normally quite careful about his facts, states that minstrels lived in slums: *Selbst die Spielleute des österreichischen Herzogs hausen in Wien [...] im Armenviertel 'Neuluke' vor dem Widmertor* (Even the minstrels of the Austrian dukes lived in the slum Neuluke outside the Widmertor).¹²⁶ It is true that our information on Neuluke and its resident entertainers derives post-1360, the date of the earliest city land registers. But Neuluke need not be a slum if young duke Albrecht (IV) himself owns a house there. Not surprisingly, Wilhalm, Albrecht's bodyguard or squire-at-arms (*Wächter*), who is likely a performer, buys a house there in 1384. Just because performers lived in this neighbourhood does not mean they lived so terribly poorly, especially since so many of them were attached to the Habsburg household. In fact, Neuluke was settled by any number of Habsburg domestics. To be sure, Neuluke lay outside the city and was cheaper than centre city (especially the Freyung and Tuchlauben area) where the affluent city council members and their families lived, but profitable vineyards also surrounded the city, and some of these vineyards were owned by minstrels just as many others were owned by town council members and wealthy merchants.¹²⁷

During illness, domestics were able to rely on additional income, sometimes from their vineyards since the brotherhood does not seem to have supplied any aid when

Heinrich Zimmermann and Albert Starzer, 5 vols (Vienna: Holzhausen, 1907), II/1, 108–283, (p. 152). All of Müller's articles in these volumes are listed according to volume, part, and page number. For a more recent discussion see Elisabeth Lichtenberger, *Die Wiener Altstadt* (Vienna: Deuticke, 1977), p. 32.

¹²⁵ Müller, 'Entwicklung' II/1, p. 154.

¹²⁶ Schubert, p. 176.

¹²⁷ Müller, 'Entwicklung', II/1, pp. 151–52.

minstrels were no longer able to work. When Mert, one of the duke's pipers, succumbed to dementia, he and his wife were not left completely destitute because they owned two vineyards. After Mert became bedridden in 1400, Elizabeth, his wife had to sell one. When she died in 1403 her will stipulated that Mert be taken care of by his friend Andrew the piper and his wife Catherine. They were to place Mert in the hospital, then bring him food three times a week and mend his bedclothes using the revenues from Mert's remaining vineyard.¹²⁸

Early records of the brotherhood are not extant. However, references to the brotherhood's beginnings in 1288 can be traced to the notes of a Brother Martin dated 1775. It seems the parish church of St Michael's was given to the Barnabites in 1626, along with all extant parish records. In 1775 Brother Martin collected the old records in the archives and copied them. In his notes he explicitly deplores the fact that the fires in the church (in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) destroyed a great many charters and other written documents of the parish. Alas, almost all records of the brotherhood were also lost. Useful to us is a charter he copied dated 7 November 1459, signed by Peter Irmely, minstrel judge, and Laurence Lautenmacher, treasurer of the brotherhood, and the members of the brotherhood called 'Zechleute der Trummeterzech und Sand Niklas Bruderschaft zu St. Michael in Wien'. This charter claimed that the brotherhood already existed in 1288 in the St Nicholas chapel next to St Michael's church: *dass selbe Zech bereits 1288 bei der damaligen St.-Nikolaus-Kapelle zunächst St. Michael in Wien*.¹²⁹ Brother Martin's copy of this charter of 1459 rings true because it mentions the chapel. The writers would not have known about the St Nicholas chapel without some written record because it was razed in 1288.

The sparse sources tell us that a brotherhood of minstrels dedicated to St Nicholas and his chapel, called the Saint Nicholas Brotherhood, was already in existence in 1288. The date explains the choice of Nicholas as patron and places the inception of the brotherhood in the period when the chapel was in use and just before the rebuilding of St Michael's itself. Thus the founding of this confraternity must have occurred between the years 1275 and 1288, and I assume that it was founded shortly after the Habsburgs established themselves in Vienna and not during Ottokar II's reign. At this point it is necessary to examine the political and social context in Vienna that could further support the dating and reveal the circumstance of the founding of the brotherhood.

In Vienna confraternities became very popular in the second half of the thirteenth century and this development offers yet a third reason to accept a thirteenth century

¹²⁸ *Die Wiener Stadtbücher*, ed. by Wilhelm Brauneder, Gerhard Jaritz, and Christian Neschwara, *Teil 1 1395–1430, Teil 2: 1401–1430* Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, *Fontes rerum austriacarum, Fontes juris*, 10/2 (Vienna: Böhlau, 1998), vol. 1, p. 373; vol. 2, p. 157.

¹²⁹ Komorzynski, p. 71.

date for the founding of the minstrel brotherhood. Certainly the earliest confraternities (c. 1275) were clearly founded by artisans on the concept of a religious community. Minstrels could easily have copied this trend and established their St Nicholas confraternity at about this time. Their motivation is also likely to have been similar. First they shared the same pious interests as other tradesmen. At the same time, they may also have had a difficult time receiving sacraments if the bishop was scrupulous about the sanctions stipulated in synods (as examples in Chapter 2 demonstrate). In any case, minstrels would have found additional advantage in banding together in a religious confraternity. Since they were relatively well off the confraternity gave them a way to pay for their own chaplain and special masses by means of their dues. Thus their domestic situation distinguished them from itinerants or city musicians who were often paid poorly.

The founding of the brotherhood is likely to have been connected with the advent of the Habsburgs in Vienna when certain innovations were made. While Ottokar Przemysl, king of Bohemia controlled the Austrian territories, he neglected Vienna, and the city suffered financially. After Rudolph I defeated Ottokar in 1278, he granted Vienna a charter that heralded new relations with the Habsburg ruling house. Four years later (1282) he invested his sons Albrecht and Rudolph with Austria and Styria.¹³⁰ With the renovation of the new castle, the Habsburgs turned Vienna into a residence that created a central position from which to rule their territories and display their power. They also reorganized their court administration by adding new offices. One of these, the new office of high chamberlain, was given supervision over all domestic servants, including minstrels. This reorganization and delegation of responsibilities appears to have centralized authority and allowed greater consistency in decision-making.¹³¹ If so, the creation of the brotherhood, with the duke's support, may have been a more efficient way for the high chamberlain to control minstrels and at the same time let them regulate themselves.

This new administrative office also speaks for the founding of the brotherhood soon after Albrecht comes to power, that is, between 1282 and 1288. However, all that can be demonstrated conclusively is that the brotherhood was in operation by 1350. Contrary to the common thesis that municipal musicians founded brotherhoods, this one is intimately connected to the ducal court.¹³² In the year 1354 the brothers elected Peter von Ebersdorf, High Chamberlain of Austria, as legal advocate

¹³⁰ Paula Fichtner, *Historical Dictionary of Austria* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1999), pp. 6–7.

¹³¹ Richard Müller, 'Wiens höfisches und bürgerliches Leben im ausgehenden Mittelalter', *Geschichte der Stadt Wien*. ed. by Heinrich Zimmermann and Albert Starzer (Vienna: Holzhausen, 1907, III/2, p. 631.

¹³² Mantuani, p. 195.

(*vogt*) of the brotherhood.¹³³ This means a minstrel judgeship exists and that both it and the brotherhood are directly under the supervision of the ducal court.¹³⁴

Since no documents exist on the minstrels and their brotherhood before 1350, I draw on the city statutes for additional, pertinent information on a new regulatory institution, the minstrel court (*Spielgrafenamt*). This is the second institution for minstrels that was possibly established first in Vienna (after 1278),¹³⁵ and after 1300, elsewhere.¹³⁶ The early dating for this office leads one to think the minstrel court is connected to the St Nicholas Brotherhood although that need not have been true initially. This type of separate jurisdiction for protected groups like Jews and foreign merchants had a precedent in city privileges but the origin and legal basis of the minstrel judgeship remains unclear. Did the minstrel judge answer to the city council or to the duke's high chamberlain? Either way, once the Vienna city law acknowledges minstrels as a special group within society, it institutes a significant legal jurisdiction that enables them to adjudicate civil and minor criminal matters while the blood court jurisdiction remains in the purview of the city judge:

Was ain man zu clagen hat hintz ainem ieglichem varundem manne, der sol darumb nindert zu recht sten, nur vor seinem spilgraven, es sei dann ain solhe sach, die an den frid oder an das leben get, da mues er umb antwurten vor dem statrichter.

[When a person brings a complaint against any minstrel, the minstrel must answer to no one but his own minstrel judge unless it concerns a breach of the peace or carries the death penalty. In that case he must answer to the city judge. *Weichbild* Art. 26, p. 58.]

¹³³ This document too has been lost, but its content can be confirmed because it is cited in the court record of a legal dispute between the minstrel advocate and the city of Vienna in 1711 according to Hans Amon, 'Das Spielgrafenamt in Österreich unter und ob der Enns', *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Wien*, 42 (1986), 7–33 (p. 11), Franz Hadamowsky, *Wien Theatergeschichte: Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des Ersten Weltkriegs*, Geschichte der Stadt Wien, 3 (Vienna: Jugend und Volk, 1988), p. 25, and Komorzynski, p. 73.

¹³⁴ This document also confirms that the advocacy of the brotherhood is hereditary. In fact it is held by the Ebersdorfer family until the sixteenth century, printed in Amon p. 11 and Mantuani p. 195.

¹³⁵ Heinrich Schuster dates this office back to 1278 in his edition of the Viennese laws, *Das Wiener Stadtrechts- oder Weichbildbuch* (Vienna: Manz'schen, 1873), pp. 31–32, hereafter cited as *Weichbild*. Peter Csendes accepts only the manuscript date that is no earlier than 1340 in *Die Rechtsquellen der Stadt Wien*, *Fontes rerum austriacarum. Fontes juris*, 9 (Vienna: Böhlau, 1986), p. 98, whereas Rudolf Geyer accepts earlier dating arguing that the 1340 laws are a renewal of the earlier ones, 'Die mittelalterlichen Stadrechte Wiens', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 58 (1950), 589–613 (pp. 590–92).

¹³⁶ The other known *Spielgraf* offices are in the far north in Lübeck and Königsberg according to Schubert, pp. 135–36.

To be sure, minstrels did not need any permission from the city to establish a religious confraternity, nor did a city council rely on one to enforce its ordinances. Yet the very creation of a minstrel jurisdiction establishes the legal basis for the eventual formation of a true guild.

During the reigns of Rudolph I and Albrecht I, several changes occurred that may have assisted the creation of this office. The appointment of a separate judge for a particular group would be extremely efficient if directly under the aegis of either the duke or the city council. A minstrel judgeship would benefit the city by enforcing the statutes on behalf of the council.¹³⁷ But if the council indeed wished to control minstrels, especially the town minstrels and itinerants, then we would expect to find a definition of the jurisdiction and at least a few regulations pertaining to them. Unfortunately, we have no such ordinances. And so the alternative interpretation is that the ducal court wanted the judgeship.

Of course, what the cities wanted to regulate also benefited the dukes. But any noble court had additional aims in mind when desiring to control minstrels: they wanted to monitor and control public opinion and, above all, their own reputation. Thus it would have been worthwhile for the nobility to set up a parallel minstrel judge within their own territorial jurisdiction. And since we know that the ducal court supported a large number of minstrels (minimally twenty at any given time after 1300), as employer it, too, needed a convenient means to regulate the activities of their domestics and itinerants as well. Schubert recognizes that control of minstrel activity was certainly in the interest of both courts and cities. Nevertheless, he also makes the important point that elsewhere the minstrel judgeship as an institution remains independent of any confraternity and works directly under the territorial prince.¹³⁸

If the minstrel judge stood under the authority of the ducal court, then the court itself would have an additional advantage. It would be able to control minstrel activity both in the city and in all the territories ruled by the Habsburgs. And by 1354 the judgeship is definitely in the hands Peter von Ebersdorf the legal advocate (*vogt*) of the brotherhood. This means the minstrel judgeship and the brotherhood are now directly under the supervision of the ducal court and not the city. All earliest information thus points to the conclusion that the confraternity was always composed of Habsburg domestic minstrels. Membership in the brotherhood brought

¹³⁷ Schubert, p. 136.

¹³⁸ To make his case Schubert lists Brachte, who was installed as king of minstrels (*könig fahrender liute*) of the archdiocese of Mainz by the archbishop in 1385. In 1393 the count palatine of the Rhineland, his neighbour, followed suit, and designated Wernher one of his domestic pipers as king of minstrels in his lands. He takes these examples from Moser, pp. 63–64, who also claims these minstrel judges did not have the confraternities behind them. Schubert states that these ‘kings’ were appointed by the lord and not elected by the members of any brotherhood. Hence he suggests these nobles copied what had been established in the cities, pp. 136–37.

advantages with it, because the organization grew. In the early fifteenth century the numbers of minstrels increased both in the city and the surrounding countryside. They joined the St Nicholas Brotherhood and swelled its membership to the extent that by 1455 seven branches of the brotherhood existed and are listed with their territories: 'It is hereby noted that the minstrel judgeships branching out of the St Nicholas Brotherhood of Vienna are 1. Tulnerfeld, 2. Korneuburg, 3. Hainburg, 4. Bohemian March, 5. Neuburg, 6. Heiligenkreuz, and 7. Stein'.¹³⁹ Thus by the fifteenth century membership must have included not only domestic minstrels belonging to the Habsburg household, but also itinerants of the countryside, town minstrels, and probably also the household minstrels of the lower nobility.

In support of my thesis that some confraternities and thus the beginnings of guilds were set up by domestic minstrels, I offer a second case. The Alsatian Piper Brotherhood is a close parallel to the St Nicholas Brotherhood in Austria. It is not known when this brotherhood was founded, because the earliest document appointing a minstrel judge dates from 1400, and by this time it is a quite large and well-organized guild. Its organization resembles the Viennese situation in that it is supported by the counts of Rappoltstein who serve as their legal advocate. This brotherhood was probably established by the domestic minstrels of the counts because it was independent of any municipal ties initially. According to the *Reichsregisterbücher*, the counts of Rappoltstein administered the office of advocate to the Piper Brotherhood as an imperial heritable fief similar to the way the high chamberlain of the Habsburgs did.¹⁴⁰ Like the Nicholas Brotherhood, the Alsations also had a minstrel court called *Kunigrich Varenden Lüte*. The letter of appointment of 1400 states that the Rappoltstein counts were obligated to appoint the minstrel judge or 'king' over all the members of the brotherhood. The judge named was at that time one of the count's household minstrels (see Appendix A for complete text). This document is very similar to a rather late Viennese one of c. 1455 referred to above. It was issued by the office of the high chamberlain Reinprecht von Ebersdorf in which he appoints Andre Steyrer minstrel judge. Exactly like the Rappoltsteiner appointment, Reinprecht stipulates the territory belonging to his jurisdiction, and requests all official persons in the territory to acknowledge the named as minstrel judge and support him in his duties. He also admonishes members of the guild to obey the rules of the organization and accept the judge's authority.

¹³⁹ *Hye sind vermerkt die spillgraffambt, die da verlassen sind aus sand Niclasbruederschafft ze Wienn. 1. Tulnerveld 2. Kornnewnburg. 3. Haynburgk, 4. Beheimischen gemärkh, 5. Newnburgk and der Leyserperkch, 6. Heyligenchrewcz, 7. Stain.* The entire document and two others concerning the St Nicholas Brotherhood c. 1455 is printed in Karl Schalk, 'Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte des Spielgrafenamts in Niederösterreich im XV. Jahrhundert', *Blätter des Vereins für Landeskunde von Niederösterreich*, 14 (1880), 312–16 (pp. 313–14).

¹⁴⁰ Schubert, p. 139, n. 49.

Unfortunately for some performers, neither the minstrel judge nor the advocate was always successful in protecting them or achieving justice. The Rappoltstein records include a fascinating series of letters that respond to the imprisonment and beating death of one of the count's lutenists allegedly at the direction of the abbot of Münster in St Georgental. The first letter is written by the minstrel judge to the abbot and the second by the count himself. In his responses, the abbot denies all wrongdoing of course, but when the count summons him to court, he fails to appear the first, and then the second time. Normally failure to appear in court brings about a guilty verdict. Unluckily for us, there are no more records of this case, so we do not know how it ended.¹⁴¹

Regardless of the inadequacies of the justice system, the Alsatian organization's membership gradually grew large enough in the fifteenth century to be divided into the five sub-groups of Thann, Rappoltswiler, Strasbourg, Rosenweiler, and Schlettstadt, just as happened in Vienna at about the same time. Since both organizations were originally a confraternity, they were dedicated to the service of a saint. In time, however, they functioned more and more like guilds as they set standards for their members, and regulated the training of apprentices. They even made provisions for members who pursued other trades on a part time basis.¹⁴² Significantly, even when many members pursued more than one trade, they valued their licence to perform music enough to pay their dues and taxes to the guild.¹⁴³

The history of the St Nicholas and Alsatian Brotherhoods indicates that these confraternities did not originate as scholars have thought. In Vienna we have no evidence that city minstrels played any role in the creation of the St Nicholas Brotherhood. Instead the founders are located in the ducal household itself. Thus it is my thesis that both the St Nicholas Brotherhood and the minstrel court were set up under the aegis of the duke's administration, possibly under Albrecht I. The inception and growth of the Alsatian Brotherhood followed the same general pattern. My suggestion answers a number of questions. It explains the Habsburg house's political motivation for supporting the judgeship at a time when the court administration was being reorganized. Then it explains the religious motivation on the part of the minstrels themselves: domestic minstrels were the most likely group to set up a confraternity or even a guild for themselves. They used the St Nicholas chapel, they had the money to support their own chaplain, and they gave donations for the celebration of masses, burials, weddings, and church expenses. Finally, it explains

¹⁴¹ The four letters, two from Rappoltstein and two from the abbot, are contained in *Rappoltsteinisches Urkundenbuch 759–1500*, ed. by Karl Albrecht (Colmar: Barth, 1891–96), vol. 4, entries 684, 685, 686, 687, and 699.

¹⁴² For examples of regulations concerning members in Strasbourg, which, by the mid-fourteenth century, is a part of the Alsatian Brotherhood and other member cities, see Moser, p. 65 and Schubert, pp. 56–58.

¹⁴³ Albrecht, vol. III, entry 809.

the repeated date of 1288 when the St Nicholas chapel was in use. During this period when it was popular for artisans to establish confraternities, it was also relatively easy for the ducal musicians to organize a religious group.

For municipal and tower musicians, the situation was different. It is not at all clear that minstrels in cities had the wealth and social consciousness necessary to establish a guild. A simple religious organization would not have offered the same social benefit as a guild. Given the fact that the Vienna Brotherhood's records give us no information about its own town minstrels, it is important to compare the way minstrels established themselves in at least one other city—Wismar. The earliest city council document regulating minstrels in municipal service comes from Wismar and demonstrates how the council defined their tasks (1343). In general, urban minstrels exhibit a similar pattern of employment as at court but there are also significant differences. Like courts, cities employed watchmen or tower musicians (*Turmbläser* or *Ratspfeifer*) initially for defensive purposes. Aesthetics and entertainment were a luxury to be enjoyed occasionally. Only instrumentalists were hired.

The earliest record of a city to employ tower musicians comes from Mechelen in 1311.¹⁴⁴ According to the Tyrolean accounts, Augsburg employed town waits in 1328. By the middle of the fourteenth century, town minstrels are documented for Basel, Nördlingen, Nürnberg, Augsburg, Soest, and Wismar.¹⁴⁵ Lübeck, Königsberg, and Wismar, all Hanseatic cities, may have employed them in the thirteenth century already.¹⁴⁶ Once cities were wealthy enough, they found additional tasks for city musicians and hired them to play fanfares for arriving dignitaries and public processions, to signal the opening of city council sessions, and to summon the urban populace for public proclamations of new city statutes and other affairs. Like the liveried household minstrels of a large court, city minstrels received wages from the city and wore the city's badge identifying them when they travelled on behalf of the council.

In the urban environment, minstrels performed repetitive tasks that require an instrument, but cannot be called performance art. Tower minstrels sounded the hours day and night and watched for fires and other dangers. They announced the setting up of the night watch and sound the official closing of the town gates at night and their opening in the morning when the guard would withdraw. This meant that a town needed a minimum of two musicians. Most often the minstrels played shawm or, after about 1350, trumpet (i.e. brass) because these instruments were loud.¹⁴⁷ Since musicians sounded their instruments to convey information to the

¹⁴⁴ Van Aerde, p. 3.

¹⁴⁵ For a detailed study of the enormous number of town and domestic musicians passing through the imperial city of Nördlingen, see Salmen 'Quellen', pp. 474–48, and for the activities of tower minstrels in Soest, Rothert, pp. 164–66.

¹⁴⁶ Schubert, p. 135.

¹⁴⁷ Bowles, 'Tower', pp. 98–99.

townspeople, they had to play pre-arranged tunes and pitches. This is music in a minimal form, used simply as a signalling technique or a means of public display. However dull some of the daily signalling might have been, we must keep in mind that it could blossom into creative concertizing whenever the occasion offered itself. When they were not in the tower, these musicians were available to play at private and public festivities. In addition to supplementing their income, playing at a party or wedding must have been much more stimulating than the routine signals and fanfares. What was even more worthwhile and enjoyable for performers was playing in ensemble, and Wismar gave them an opportunity to do just that.

Ordinances from the Hanseatic city of Wismar regulate minstrels on and off duty demonstrating that they were hired primarily to protect the city (see Appendix F). The harsh terms of the statutes of 1343 offer performers little security and little pay since the statutes mention more than once that if the musicians do not agree with the ordinances, they must leave the city.¹⁴⁸ The town council permitted them to perform privately at weddings but fixed the rates and required them to perform for the city whenever called upon. At the same time, the town council protected its minstrels from competition by prohibiting citizens to hire performers from outside. Such measures to protect city minstrels are not unique to Wismar. Although no documentation exists that Strasbourg had municipal minstrels in the thirteenth century, its ordinances also prohibited itinerants from entering the city unless invited by a visitor.¹⁴⁹ Again the reason must have been to protect city performers. The apparent monopoly for town musicians in Wismar certainly barred itinerants but threatening municipal minstrels with expulsion also tended to keep them under control and prevent prices from rising. Wismar's cavalier attitude of letting minstrels go indicates that jobs were few and competition among minstrels intense. But since the ordinance mentions the threat of expulsion twice in just a few lines, it appears that minstrels did dare to oppose the council and find work elsewhere. Therefore, being cast out of a city to be a wayfarer for a while was not such a feared event as scholars have thought.

Despite the apparent harshness of city council rules, the citizens of Wismar were not deaf to the pleasures of music. The ordinance contains unique evidence that the council compelled its town musicians to perform concerts as part of their official obligations:

Item jocolatores hic in Ciuitate jacere solentes quibus premissa datur libertas debent singulis diebus dominicis et festinis infra festa pasche et johannis quando domi fuerint Ciuibus nostris in Reseto de vespere seruire et ludos suos excercere. Quod si aliquis non faceret mansionem hic diucius habere non deberet.

¹⁴⁸ Busse, p. 67.

¹⁴⁹ Vogeis, p. 41.

[In addition, minstrels who reside here in the city and to whom the above permissions are given, are required, as long as they are home, to present their performances evenings in the rose garden for our citizens on specified Sundays and holy days within the Easter period and on St Johns' day. If a minstrel does not comply, he may not reside here any longer.]¹⁵⁰

The willingness of the Wismar musicians to play concerts suggests that they actually considered performance primary and their routine duties secondary. In addition, they each played several instruments, some of which were not appropriate to municipal duties. The ordinance lists fiddle, pipe (shawm), drum, horn, crowd, flute and harp. Since cities did not hire harpists and fiddlers, these people were doublers or triplers who played pipe, trumpet, horn, and drum for the city. A number of musicians sang, too, and thus made possible a varied programme when they concertized. Wismar's regulation is novel among statutes for town minstrels, for no other city is known to take advantage of the artistic talents of its performers as it does. Since no pay is mentioned, these concerts become yet another of the many duties expected of minstrels, but for once, the musicians are performing much more in keeping with a performer's musical and artistic aspirations. This brings me back to the thesis I began with, that performers lived according to values and priorities built on their desire and need to perform.

What we have learned is that urban documents essentially confirm the practical goals of employing minstrels also reflected in the account books of the nobility. Put another way, minstrels follow the same employment strategy in both contexts. While the primary duties at court and in town make use of song and instrument, the employability of minstrels depends just as much on additional skills of information gathering, maintaining communication between groups, and managing the movements of large numbers of people. In modern terms, we might say these skills subsidized and also complemented their performance art.

Given this cluster of related activities, it follows that the various tasks were not thought of as specialized occupations because at this time no one had steady full time work. Only gradually did the various terms available come to delineate distinct occupations consistently once performers were able to specialize gradually after 1400.¹⁵¹ Both court and city left minstrels time to practise their skills and to perform. At court they were on call to perform at any time, but only extraordinary festivities offered the singular challenge of creating elaborate ensemble compositions. In the city they often enjoyed a monopoly within city walls. Consequently even when

¹⁵⁰ The Latin text is cited according to Busse, p. 68. The entire text of the Wismar ordinance is cited in Appendix F also from Busse, pp. 68–69.

¹⁵¹ I am not discounting the possibility of uneven development. Other areas, even neighbouring ones in Germany and the Low Countries were able just a generation or two later to support full-time heralds who were designated as such and whose occupation and duties could be distinguished from the duties of those called minstrels when they were blazoning arms (i.e. Gelre herald).

performers were on regular salary their duties allowed or encouraged part time performing, and because they were sent on errands and permitted to go on circuits, their travel enhanced their performing skills and repertoire. Hence the minstrel was free to pursue his own activities and travel for long periods of time when not needed. Indeed, the fact that Edward I used his minstrels of the five different regions for espionage makes it obvious that their absences made them even more useful. Upon their return they would report what they learned in the course of their travels.¹⁵²

Travel has shown itself to be essential to performance. All minstrels, employed and wayfarers alike, travelled. Those who worked for a master had little choice when sent on an errand whereas itinerants would not have taken on the hardships of travel if they did not desire to perform. From the German account books we know that itinerants were taken in and remunerated for their presentations.¹⁵³ As they moved around, wayfarers performed in each new location and served as long as they were welcome. This is certainly attested by entries for Peter Suchenwirt, Frauenlob, Regenbogen, and Meissner whose songs and poems have come down to us.

In conclusion, three points speak for the fact that minstrels saw themselves foremost as performers. Town musicians obtained the right to perform at private weddings and parties. On their travels performers found new audiences and learned from each other in jam sessions. In towns, performers tended to live close to each other making practice sessions and co-operation easier. Thus we can safely say, what mattered to minstrels at court, in city, and on the king's highway was being on centre stage.

¹⁵² Bullock-Davies points out that Edward's minstrels were paid wages on a fixed daily, not annual, amount because they were paid only for the days they were actually in residence (*Menestrellorum*, p. 16–17). There are literary parallels in which a herald or singer-messenger promises to report on what he learns and sees at court during his long journeys. See my discussion of the fish-knight in *Crône* by Heinrich von dem Türlin in Chapter 5.

¹⁵³ The records of the Pentecost feast of Edward I yield a different perspective. There only those performers received pay who were identified domestics belonging to the king and his nobles, and persons like Matilda Makejoy who were already known to the court, see Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum*, pp. 9–10.

Part II

Appealing to the Audience

Enêas der mâre / enbôt offenbâre[...].
Swër gût umb êre wolde / daz er frôlich quâme/
und ez sô vile nâme / daz ez im iemer mohte fromen/
und allen sînen nâchkomen.

Heinrich von Veldeke

CHAPTER FIVE

The Poet-Minstrel as Historian

Part I delineated the social cultural parameters that circumscribed performance custom primarily in three areas. First, society in general stigmatized minstrels, and Church documents and theologians labelled them transgressors having little or no social function. Second, performance required a life-style of mobility and adaptability, and inculcated behavioural habits that threatened the norms professed by theologians, the guardians of morality. Third, the part-time employment situation for most professions meant that minstrels, when not entertaining, applied their skills to making a living by means of odd jobs. Often these jobs aided a minstrel's ability to win the support of a wealthy patron and gain more permanent employment.

I now turn to the voice of the poet-minstrels themselves to discover their own responses to these three issues. How did they define their function in society, how did they remake the pariah image imposed upon them by society, and finally, what aesthetic performative strategies did they use to appeal to their audiences and create authority for their performances? At this point it is possible to say that the answers to these questions depend on the minstrel's developing a rapport with listeners and spectators. Hence the following three chapters build on the premise (discussed in Chapter 3) that successful performances produce an electrically charged, collective experience between audience and performer. This means that a performance casts a magical spell that fuses the listeners and spectators into a cohesive unit and enables them to take in the performance and accept its message at least temporarily. I assume

that this electrically charged, collective experience was frequently achieved by the poet-performers whose texts are extant.¹

Since the most fundamental complaint against minstrels was that they served no necessary social function although it was acknowledged that they gave respite from drudgery and toil, performers had to convince their listeners of their considerable service to them. To this end the poet-minstrels promised the lords enhanced renown. They presented themselves as moral and political historians who commented knowledgeably on past and contemporary public events. (The modern term might be spin doctor.) They also claimed to be the rhetorically accomplished performer-disseminators of such histories and commentaries. Thus poet-minstrels claimed a great deal of power for themselves and for their performances.

Significant evidence for this thesis can be found in two romances. Heinrich von Veldeke's *Eneit* (1184–90) and Heinrich von dem Türlin's *Diu Crône* (1230) offer relatively detailed presentation of the self-defined role of the minstrel as both commentator-chronicler and poet-performer. The narratives of both are transitional. The one introduces the courtly narrative or romance genre into German speaking areas, and the other reflects back on and breaks the established pattern of Arthurian romances about 40–50 years later. As a result neither fits any generic category definitively, but their undetermined nature makes them all the more revealing.

It is best to begin with the earlier poet. Of Heinrich von Veldeke or Henric van Veldeken we know only that he came from the Limburg area west of the Maas and probably belonged to the family who were ministerials of the Counts of Loon.² In manuscripts he is sometimes called *her* indicating noble status and sometimes *meister* indicating either a Latin education or mastery as a poet. His vernacular reworking of the Aeneas story was completed at the behest of Hermann of Thuringia, whose court at the Wartburg became a famous centre of performance art at the beginning of the thirteenth century.³

Heinrich's *Eneit* is recognized as a bridge between the vernacular historical writing of the twelfth century and the new courtly romance based on the French model.⁴ Although the *Eneit* is no longer an epic, it is not yet a romance because it

¹ I assume that the extant poetic texts, coming down to us in late copies, were enjoyed in electrifying performances on occasion because the narratives and songs of those who had a reasonably good reputation are most likely to have survived.

² What is known of Heinrich von Veldeke's life is summarized in *VL*, 3, pp. 899–918.

³ See Ursula Peters study of Hermann of Thuringia's court and the contributions of *Minnesinger* and minstrels to the self-assessment and consciousness of the nobility by publicizing the various knightly ideals, *Fürstenhöfe und höfische Dichtung. Der Hof Hermanns von Thüringen als literarisches Zentrum*, Konstanzer Universitätsreden, 113 (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag, 1981).

⁴ The *Eneit* has been compared with the *Kaiserchronik* and *Annolied*. See Dieter Kartschoke's 'Nachwort' to his edition, Heinrich von Veldeke, *Eneasroman* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1986), pp. 841–79 (p. 868) and Frank Shaw, 'Kaiserchronik and Eneide', *German*

has elements of both genres. Its historical perspective of looking back to a particular time places it among Latin chronicles and vernacular epics that relate the story of the past. In addition, it also looks forward in that it heralds the romance genre in Germany.

To appreciate adequately the truly bi-directional nature of the structure and content in the *Eneit*, it is worthwhile recapitulating the medieval concept of history as *translatio*. Marc Bloch captured the implication of *translatio*, the continuation of the Roman Empire, as it influenced thought in twelfth and thirteenth century Europe:

How could people who believed that the Roman Empire was still in existence and that the Saxon and Salian princes were direct successors of Caesar or Augustus resist the temptation to picture the emperors of old Rome as men exactly like the rulers of their own day?⁵

If *translatio* means that the present was interpreted in terms of the past, the *Eneit* offers a unique historical perspective in that it looks both to the past and to the future. Heinrich's text recounts the past by reproducing Virgil's story in German, and moves into the present by inserting into the story of Eneas a praise of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, and then redirects the genealogy of Eneas's successors to project into the future of the Holy Roman Empire, a future that extends beyond the author's present. The very fact that Heinrich achieved this in a single text places him not only in the footsteps of the great Roman poet but at the same time reveals an explicit attempt to interpret the past, present, and the future. Heinrich's comparison of Eneas's achievements in the distant past with those of Frederick Barbarossa in his contemporary world also calls for a comparison of the aims and achievements of the two poets. Knowing that the reputation Virgil had created for Aeneas lasted for a thousand years, Heinrich may have wished to establish for Frederick a comparable reputation in the Christian realm. If histories were read to guide one's actions, then Heinrich, by creating a lasting reputation for Frederick I, gave to his own and to future generations a standard by which they could judge the immediate past and direct the future. Such a narrative programme has far-reaching implications for the contributions of minstrels—those who create and disseminate histories and commentaries in their performances. These contributions are the focus of the following discussion.

In the *Eneit* we find that the bi-directional narrative defines the poet-performer as Janus-faced. This does not delimit him but reveals his backward and forward gaze as extending beyond our usual generic expectations. My goal is to extract from the text what information is available about the evaluative and encomiastic functions of the producers and performers of narrative. By comparing Heinrich's narrative to the traditional genres at his disposal, his additions and adaptations become visible. I

Life and Letters, 24 (1971), 295–303.

⁵ Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. by L. A. Manyon, 2 vols (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), vol. 1, p. 91.

suggest that the three historical and literary forms (romance, chronicle, and epic) available to Heinrich have been appropriated and manipulated to accommodate a specific narrative programme. This programme defines the poet-performer according to a set of functions frequently thought of as distinct—the knightly poet, chronicler, and minstrel.⁶ The affinities between these three genres and these authorial roles are many, for all are concerned with establishing and maintaining the ruler's fame. Because *laudatio* is necessarily an evaluative activity, the representatives of this triad are in a position to influence their contemporaries' view of the past, the present, and the future. Thus the activity common to these three roles requires an author to look backward and forward, to recount the history of the Roman Empire, to extol its current achievement, and to claim the ability to ensure its future reputation.⁷ A look at the literary foundation of historical writing, namely the Latin tradition, will reveal the context and novelty of Heinrich's narrative programme.

Latin formed a great divide between different types of stories of the past. Generally sources in Latin whether epic or chronicle were considered reliable. Even Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* was accepted initially without question by many. In contrast, the situation with vernacular texts is more complicated. When the chroniclers writing in German aspired to lending their texts the status of a reliable report on past events, they attempted to adhere to the standards of the Latin chroniclers. That the *Eneit* is in compliance with this trend can be ascertained from its fulfilment of the criteria for historiography and from the evidence for its reception.

There are three major criteria for reliability in vernacular texts: the use of written, preferably Latin, sources; placement of events according to dates and reigns of rulers; and organization according to a family tree, or a genealogy.⁸ These criteria certainly hold for the *Annolied* and the *Kaiserchronik* (1147), with which the *Eneit* has been compared.⁹ The *Kaiserchronik* explicitly requires written documentation for all claims: *Swer nû welle bewaeren, / daz Dieterîch Ezzelen saehe, / der haize*

⁶ Wolfgang Mohr had already noted the permeability of these categories when he commented that Heinrich styled himself a knight and minstrel in one: 'Aus Veldekes Versen hört man die Siegesstimmung des ritterlichen Spielmanns heraus', 'Mittelalterliche Feste und ihre Dichtung', in *Festschrift für Klaus Ziegler*, ed. by Eckehard Catholy and Winfried Hellmann (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1968), pp. 37–60 (p. 46).

⁷ I am not disputing that *Eneit* is a romance, but rather, attempting to point out the extent of the author's reliance on the traditional forms, both epic and historical writing, at his disposal in shaping and focusing the content of his literary work.

⁸ Several historical and literary historical studies define the relationship between chronicle and vernacular poetry. I follow their lead. See Alfred Ebenbauer, 'Das Dilemma mit der Wahrheit. Gedanken zum "historisierenden Roman" des 13. Jahrhunderts', in *Geschichtsbewußtsein*, ed. by Gerhardt, pp. 52–71, and Hans Patze, 'Mäzene der Landesgeschichtsschreibung im späten Mittelalter', *Vorträge und Forschungen*, 31 (1987), 331–70.

⁹ Frank Shaw, 'Kaiserchronik', p. 297 and p. 301.

daz buoch vur tragen (ll. 14176–78).¹⁰ (Whoever may want to prove / that Dietrich saw Etzel / let him have the book brought forth.) In his *Eneit*, Heinrich von Veldeke has done exactly what the chroniclers require. By writing an interpretive translation of his written French source, the *Roman d'Eneas*, considered at the time to be a historical work, Heinrich claims to have produced an accurate, historical account.¹¹

Unlike the prose of the Latin chronicles, the vernacular stories of the past are written primarily in rhymed couplets and are therefore indistinguishable in form from epics and romances. This lack of a distinct boundary between historiography and poetic narrative has made it difficult to discuss the historical aspects of both orally conceived and written epics like the *Rolandslied* and *Alexanderlied*. The Middle High German genre designation, *liet* is vague, often referring to a strophic work. It is applied to twelfth-century German epics as well as to chronicles, and in the *Kaiserchronik*, the narrator, speaking as if in the situation of an oral recitation, identifies the work he is beginning as a *liet* that is based on a chronicle:

In des almächtigen gotes minnen
 sô wil ich des liedes beginnen.
 daz scult ir gezogenliche vernemen:
 jâ mac iuh vil wole gezemen
 ze hôren älliu frumichait. (1–5)
 [...]
 Ein buoch ist ze diute getihtet,
 daz uns Rômisches rîches wol berihtet,
 gehaizzen ist iz crônica. (15–17)

[With the love of almighty God I shall begin this song (*liet*). You should take it in attentively for it is quite proper for you to hear everything that edifies [...]. A book has been composed in German that reports fully to us [of] the Roman Empire. It is called chronicle.]

Here the chronicle is referred to as a song or strophe, as something to be sung although it is not written in strophes. It is also evident that this text is to be heard and not read silently.¹² One may even assume that in a monastic environment, it would

¹⁰ Cited according to *Die Kaiserchronik eines Regensburger Geistlichen*, ed. by Edward Schröder, MGH Deutsche Chroniken, vol. 1, pt. 1 (1892; Zürich: Weidmann, 1969).

¹¹ On Heinrich von Veldeke's debt to epic tradition, see Frank Shaw, 'Das historische Epos als Literaturgattung in frühmittelhochdeutscher Zeit', *Studien zur frühmittelhoch-deutschen Literatur. Cambrider Colloquium, 1971*, ed. by L. P. Johnson (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974), pp. 275–91 and Kartschoke, p. 844.

¹² The text continues with its truth claim and then addresses the audience directly: *nû grîfe wir daz guote liet an* (now we begin that good song) indicating not only the intended means of reception, but also that the term *liet* indicates a genre that is received orally. It also confirms Dennis H. Green's point that medieval generic designations take into account the manner of performance. He lists *lied* as indicating singing for the most part and applies to *Minnesang*, gnomic poetry, and epic song but claims that chronicles and romances were read aloud,

be more likely to be read than recited from memory. Whether sung or recited, its aural reception is coupled nevertheless with the assurance of a written source, one that is called by its Latin name, *cronica*, because this source is vital for its truth claim. Thus the term *liet* does not distinguish clearly between written, vernacular verse chronicles and sung epics both of which were received as true accounts of events from the past.

The difference between the two types of text is significant, however. Although received as history, epics like the *Alexanderlied* and *Annolied* focus on a central, heroic figure. The same holds true for Heinrich's *Eneit* that does not list chronologically the emperors and their deeds. It contains other requisite chronicle elements, and yet it conforms to the *Alexanderlied* and *Rolandslied* model of historical epic in which the hero's life shapes the narrative. Evidence for fourteenth century England, too, indicates that histories of Troy, Alexander, and Charlemagne were understood largely as factual reports of actual historical events.¹³

Manuscript evidence also confirms the reception of epics as history.¹⁴ We can tell that works such as the *Alexanderlied* were considered histories because as early as the twelfth century, they were placed in the chronologically correct position in vernacular manuscripts.¹⁵ Likewise, the *Eneit* was placed together with other historical works in two manuscripts. Manuscript H contains the *Liet von Troya* (c. 1190–1217), a work that Heinrich's patron, Hermann who became Landgrave of Thuringia, had commissioned Herbot von Fritzlar to translate from the French. Since this song recounting the history of the war from the Trojan perspective tells of events that happened before Eneas left Troy, the text precedes the *Eneit* in manuscript H. Although this extant manuscript was written in 1333 for Wilhelm von Kirweiler of Würzburg, it can be assumed that these two texts were thought of already during Hermann's time as a chronological history.¹⁶ In manuscript w, 1474

Medieval Listening and Reading: The Primary Reception of German Literature 800–1300, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 65–69. The use of *liet* in the *Kaiserchronik* does not bear out this distinction for the twelfth century.

¹³ Richard F. Green confirms this reception for England in *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp. 136–37.

¹⁴ It is well known that epics and other narratives were understood as history and that this reception was complex. Later writers of chronicles frequently inserted large sections from *chanson de geste*, Germanic epic and classical romance, but excluded courtly, especially Arthurian, romance. In contrast, Heinrich von Veldeke is transforming the classical historical epic into a historical, yet courtly romance.

¹⁵ The concept of chronological organization has been demonstrated for the well-known Vorau Codex which places the *Alexanderlied* between the Old and New Testament. See Karl Konrad Polheim, *Die deutschen Gedichte der Vorauer Handschrift* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1958).

¹⁶ Horst Brunner, 'Von der stat Troya vrsprung, päwung, streyten vnd irer zerstörung.

Vienna, the *Eneit* is followed chronologically by a chronicle of kings and popes up to 1474 indicating that Heinrich's text continued to be received as a historical account until the end of the fifteenth century.

At the same time, Heinrich's account of Eneas reflects the affinity of chronicle with romance. The story is a romance in which courtly conduct and ideals, especially with respect to women, are portrayed. Beginning in the twelfth century, the issues of courtly behaviour became important also to writers of family chronicles compiled for secular nobility. Both groups of authors pass judgement on the actions and affairs of their contemporaries in addition to relating events in the distant past. The description of the wedding feast of Lavinia and Eneas is an excellent early example of this intersection between chronicle and romance. In the course of this feast account, we can locate the poet's debt to chronicle tradition and discover the significance of his novel discussion about the role of entertainers.

Be the occasion a wedding or knighting, the grand courtly feast has become by the time Heinrich is writing a type scene with a relatively fixed sequence of events, themes and motifs. Such grand events are described both in historical and literary narratives. Geoffrey's *Historia regum Britanniae*, completed 1136, appears to be the primary source for this type scene. Not only do such type scenes occur in both historical and literary narrative, but chronicle and literary descriptions of such feasts have influenced each other.¹⁷ In fact, this intertextuality is the product of an exchange between authors of literary narratives and chronicles; it is based on their common task of *laudatio*. After all, the purpose of staging a great court feast was the fame and prestige to be derived, and so the actual customs practised became the guide for all descriptions. And the initial reason for recounting the affair was also shared by chronicle and literary narrative: to demonstrate to the reader that the ruler or figure in question was indeed important enough to be supported.

Comparing chronicle account to romance reveals the degree of exchange between them. Wolfgang Mohr has compared Eneas's wedding with the celebration of the knighting of Frederick Barbarossa's two sons in Mainz, 1184 that is described in a

Literarische Formen der Vermittlung historischen Wissens an nicht-lateinkundiges Publikum im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit', *Deutschunterricht*, 41 (1989), 55–73 (p. 61).

¹⁷ According to Rosemarie Marquardt, *Das höfische Fest im Spiegel der mittelhochdeutschen Dichtung (1140–1240)* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1985), p. 12, there is no typical feast with fixed sequence of events. But if that were so, she would not have been able to organize her monograph to match exactly the basic narrative layout that applies to every literary feast description since Heinrich's *Eneit*. See also Trude Ehlert who recognizes that Heinrich's wedding description stood model for all subsequent literary feast scenes, 'Die Funktionen des Hochzeitsfestes in deutscher erzählender Dichtung vornehmlich des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts', in *Feste und Feiern im Mittelalter. Paderborner Symposium des Mediävistenverbandes*, ed. by Detlef Altenburg, Jörg Jarnut, Hans-Hugo Steinhoff (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1991), pp. 391–400 (p. 392).

contemporary family chronicle, *Chronicon Hanoniense*, completed in 1196 by Gislebert de Mons. Mohr has demonstrated the strikingly close correspondence in themes, motifs, and sequence of information between this chronicle and Heinrich's *Eneit*.¹⁸ Since Heinrich and Gislebert focus on the same themes, it follows that they both consider the same information important. These include the occasion for the celebration, the number and rank of guests, splendour and expense of the banquet, pomp and wealth displayed during the entertainments and presentation of gifts. The small differences indicate the interests of the two authors: Heinrich omits information on tournaments whereas Gislebert uses the tournament as an opportunity to display his heraldic knowledge. But more importantly, their common concerns reflect the shared reasons for producing their respective narratives and, therefore, for the existence of the type scene itself. It becomes a literary means of recording and promoting the prestige and power of the host who is, in most cases, king.

When Wolfgang Mohr reflected on the two accounts, he had in mind feast descriptions from several romances. This broad comparison led him to conclude that the similarity between Gislebert's chronicle and Eneas's wedding implied that Gislebert's description of the knighting contained more romance elements than the wedding in the actual *Eneit* romance: 'Hinsichtlich des Festablaufs leiht die Chronik dem Mainzer Fest sogar mehr 'epische Züge' als die 'Eneide' der Hochzeit'.¹⁹ However, Mohr drew this conclusion because he compared Eneas's wedding to feasts recounted in later, not earlier, works and consequently underestimated the impact of Heinrich's modified type scene on those later romances. Therefore, we have to credit Heinrich with the innovations. With Eneas's wedding, Heinrich created the first elaborate literary presentation of a contemporary courtly feast. He furnished the scene with the events necessary for the culmination of the plot and triumph of the love theme by celebrating the marriage and coronation that ensure Eneas's assumption of the throne.

In Heinrich's version the minstrels are the primary novelty. Eneas begins his feast preparations by inviting performers:

Enêas der mâre / enbot offenbâre.[...] / Swer gût umb êre wolde / daz er frôlich quâme
/ und ez sô vile nâme / daz ez im iemer mohte fromen / und allen sînen nâchkomen.

[Eneas the illustrious made publicly known [that] whoever wishes material rewards in exchange for public renown should come joyfully and receive so much to supply his needs the rest of his life and those of his heirs. ll. 336, 1–8)]

The addition of minstrels may seem trivial but this detail concerning the function of entertainment is genuinely new; neither Geoffrey's *Historia* nor the *Roman d'Eneas* specifically mention activities of minstrels, and yet shortly after the *Eneit*, minstrels

¹⁸ Mohr, 'Feste', pp. 39–42.

¹⁹ Mohr, 'Feste', p. 44.

become synonymous with wedding festivities and grand feasts in romance and shorter narratives.²⁰

A comparison with the *Roman d'Eneas* is instructive for understanding the importance of the minstrel (*Spielmann*) in Heinrich's text. The wedding celebration in the *Roman d'Eneas*, added by the French translator of Virgil, takes up 39 lines of text and is similar to coronation descriptions in eleventh-century chronicles.²¹ Heinrich lengthened the French description by 82 lines. Of these, slightly more than half, that is 48 lines, are allotted to minstrels. The attention devoted to the entertainers develops their role within the context of the feast and, as we shall see, extends to them the responsibility of *laudatio* already noted for authors of chronicles and narratives. First mentioned in the list of invited guests, the minstrels are accorded 13 out of 20 lines of the guest list thus making their participation more noteworthy than that of the nobles. The text explicitly states that they came to ply their trade and to accept expensive gifts. The entertainment they provide after the meal is dealt with in 12 lines, but Heinrich requires 36 lines, a full third of the passage, to characterize the climax of the festivities. The festivities climax in the elaborate gift-giving ceremony in which expensive gifts are presented to the minstrels.²² For the ceremony to work, the recipients, which are the minstrels, are shown to be just as necessary as the donors. After the feast the minstrels then go out and sing the praises of the elaborate affair and their generous host. Since so little is said about entertainments at the wedding, it is reasonable to conclude that for Heinrich the function of the minstrels lies elsewhere. Their purpose is to attend the event in order to be eyewitnesses rather than to perform on the spot. Thus, contrary to the image set up by theologians, minstrels are not presented here as entertainers who are responsible only for the jocularity and conviviality of the festival itself. Rather, they are depicted as fulfilling a social function tacitly acknowledged by the host. They serve specifically in the capacity of *laudatores* and commentators on the events they witness.

Minstrels are not the only ones who gain from this climax. Its primary aim is to glorify Eneas, the new king who is in need of fame and renown. Because he is a newcomer, his qualifications for kingship aside from the martial arts have yet to be

²⁰ I cite from *Heinrich von Veldeke*, ed. by Ludwig Ettmüller (Leipzig: Göschen'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1852). Of course, minstrels were consistently mentioned in descriptions of royal feasts in Latin chronicles already in the tenth century, but this was not the case in vernacular until Heinrich von Veldeke's account. On the typicality of minstrels in descriptions of wedding feasts in Latin chronicles, see Franz-Reiner Erkens, '*Fecit nuptias regio, ut decuit, apparatu*. Hochzeitsfeste als Akte monarchischer Repräsentation in salischer Zeit', in *Feste*, ed. by Altenburg, pp. 401–21 (pp. 403–04).

²¹ For a few examples see Marquardt, pp. 48–51.

²² Heinz Wolter describes the expensive gifts Frederick Barbarossa distributed to a great many people at Mainz in 1184, 'Der Mainzer Hoftag von 1184 als politisches Fest', in *Feste*, ed. by Altenburg, pp. 193–99 (p. 197).

established and must be built upon the show of splendour and generosity the feast supplies. At the same time, this climax celebrates the storyteller and encomiast by implication. The survival of Virgil's text confirms his success in creating a lasting reputation for Aeneas and the Roman Empire. Similarly, the very act of elaborating on the feast type scene demonstrates Heinrich's ability to create additional prestige for the new king. Furthermore, this text links our knightly poet to minstrels by acknowledging the encomiastic role the minstrels play. It provides explicit information on the minstrel's task that is to attend the celebration and then to go forth and exalt the host's power and munificence in his own tongue:

den spilmannen sie gâven
grôzlichen unde sô,
daz si dannen schieden frô
und lob dem kunege sunen
ieslîch nâch sîner zungen (ll. 346, 28–32)²³

[They gave to the minstrels generously and in such a way that they [minstrels] departed happy and sang the king's praises, each in his own tongue.]

Thus, what is implicit in the activity of the knightly poet, Heinrich von Veldeke, is identical to the explicitly stated activity of the minstrels. At no point does the text indicate that creators and disseminators are not the same person. The minstrels mentioned may create their own songs and narratives praising the wedding or may reproduce Heinrich's version. Either scenario stresses two connected actions on the part of performers. First they experience the grandeur of the feast on the spot, and later they describe and praise what they saw and heard everywhere they go. For this reason, it behooved great lords to invite as many minstrels to a grand feast as possible. Eneas is speaking in this context and referring to performers (*gernde liute*) when he expresses his disappointment, *daz ir [Spilleute] sô wênich dâ war ./ die sines gûtes gerden* (l. 346, 36) (that so few [minstrels] were there who desired some of his gifts.)

The host's reward for inviting performers to a great wedding festivity, making this eyewitness experience available to them, and giving them a proper reward, Heinrich assures us, is far-reaching fame, *Dâ von sprach man dô wîten* (l. 347, 13) (People spoke of it far and wide).²⁴ This statement reveals more than a sharing of function by knightly poet and minstrel. Since the event described by Heinrich and

²³ All citations come from Ludwig Ettmüller's edition of *Heinrich von Veldeke* and are not appreciably different in the newer edition, Henric van Veldeken, *Eneide*, ed. by Gabriele Schieb and Theodor Frings, *Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters*, 58 (Berlin: Akademie, 1964) or Heinrich von Veldeke, *Eneasroman*, ed. by Dieter Kartschoke (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1986).

²⁴ In *Annales Hanoniae*, Jacob of Guines mentions that, *hirdi* and *histriones* performed the task Veldeke assigned to minstrels—they composed and disseminated a *cantilena*. The reference is in Josef Fleckenstein, 'Das Turnier als höfisches Fest im hochmittelalterlichen Deutschland', in *Das ritterliche Turnier*, ed. by J. Fleckenstein, pp. 229–56 (p. 252).

praised by the minstrels stands at the beginning of Eneas's royal career, it implies that poet and minstrel are actually indistinguishable because they create and control the reputation of the ruler. Mohr had already recognized that the text valorized minstrels, and he readily asserted that Heinrich consciously assumed the perspective of the minstrels who enjoyed the feasting and generosity of the host. This assumption led him to posit an alliance between Heinrich and the minstrels that equates them: 'Er redet dabei hörbar pro domo als einer, der wohl selbst als "Ritter" gesellschaftsfähig ist und doch keinen Trennungstrich zieht zwischen sich und den "Spilleuten", dem "fahrenden Volk"'.²⁵ What Mohr sensed, namely an affinity between poet and minstrel based upon a common task, can in fact be demonstrated in the Mainz section immediately following the wedding. As the wedding comes to a close, the narration abruptly translates the reader in time and place from the distant past of the incipient Roman Empire, to the well-known current event in the Holy Roman Empire: the knighting of Frederick Barbarossa's sons in 1184. In this excursus Heinrich illustrates the common function of minstrel and knightly poet by example. What he specifies in the type scene as the minstrel's function of nurturing and amplifying the ruler's prestige, he then accomplishes himself in this Mainz section. As he does this, he obliterates all distinction between a knight-poet and poet-minstrel.

The shift from Eneas to Barbarossa is so great both in style and topic that scholars have doubted its authenticity.²⁶ The differences between the previous section of text and the Mainz excursus exhibit stylistic and topical shift, but not a shift in subject. One point of criticism is that the Mainz section does not contribute to the plot and

²⁵ Mohr, 'Feste', p. 45. In contrast, see Fleckenstein's discussion in which he states that the knight-poet (*not* minstrel) speaks from within his own class whereas the *histrion* describes it from the outside, 'Turnier', p. 253. It is, of course, possible for a poet to take any stance he chooses. To establish the boundaries between poet, minstrel and *histrion* is a complex question. See my discussion, 'The Many Faces of the Medieval Court Minstrel', in *in höherem prise*, ed. by McConnell, pp. 31–44.

²⁶ Because of the many differences in style, Theodor Frings and Gabriele Schieb do not believe that Heinrich wrote the so-called Staufer sections. See specifically 'Der Eneideepilog', in their *Drei Veldeke Studien*, Abhandlungen der deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 6 (Berlin: Akademie, 1949), p. 75; and Gabriele Schieb, *Heinrich von Veldeke* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1965). In contrast, Marie-Louise Dittrich accepts Heinrich's authorship and offers an explanation for the stylistic differences, 'Die Eneide' Heinrichs von Veldeke. T. 1, *Quellenkritischer Vergleich mit dem 'Roman d'Eneas' und Vergils 'Aeneis'* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1966), pp. 587–90. For my argument, however, it does not matter whether the Mainz segment was written by Heinrich or anyone else because it became part of the text early enough in all manuscripts. Therefore, whoever the author, his reception of the text represents a contemporary interpretation, even if not Heinrich's. See also Gabriele Schieb, *Die Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Eneide Heinrichs von Veldeken und das limburgische Original*, Sitzungsberichte der deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 3 (Berlin: Akademie, 1960). For simplicity, I shall assume that Heinrich is indeed the author of the entire *Eneit*.

can be removed from the romance without loss. What little information is provided is somewhat disorganized and repetitive, and the diction is less precise than in the previous section. This part also contains what Frings and Schieb consider to be overly numerous assurances of truth.²⁷ The author abandons the French written source at this point and gives a report on contemporary events that have no written sources as yet. The truth claim here is based instead on the eyewitness description offered by the first person voice of a poet-performer. However great the stylistic break from Rome to Mainz, the very nature of a sudden insertion forces a comparison between the previous section and this one. Therefore, the important question is not whether the Mainz section can be attributed to Heinrich, but why this Mainz excursus exists in the form it does.

The stylistic differences that so disturbed Frings and Schieb do not break with the overall organization of the romance and are, therefore, not so extreme that they cannot be programmatic. Whoever wrote the Mainz portion integrated it to reflect the author's general views because the persona of the narrator does not change. But most significant for our interpretation is the outdoing topos that makes possible the sudden leap from Rome to Mainz and at the same time reveals the intent to compare past and present:

Dâ von sprach man dô wîten.
 Ichn vernam von hôhzîte
 in allen wîlen mâre,
 diu alsô grôz wâre,
 alsam dô het Enêas,
 wan diu ze Meginze dâ was,
 die wir selbe sâgen,
 desn dorfen wir niet frâgen
 die was betalle unmâzliche (ll. 347, 13–21)

[People spoke of it far and wide. I have never heard of a feast that was so great as Eneas had organized except the one given in Mainz. We saw it ourselves, [so] we needn't ask about it, [for] it was immeasurably grand.]

The outdoing topos creates the basis for comparing the two events. Yet the comparison made here does not lead to Mohr's interpretation that the two events are simply equated.²⁸ Instead, according to Marie-Louise Dittrich, it proclaims that there has been no such great event until the contemporary one, and this claim implies a depreciation of the past in favour of the present.²⁹

²⁷ Frings and Schieb, 'Drei', pp. 35–37.

²⁸ Mohr: 'So verschmelzen die beiden Feste, das historische und das gegenwärtige, miteinander; eines kann für das andere stehen', 'Feste', p. 41.

²⁹ Ernst R. Curtius defines the outdoing topos precisely in this manner, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 165, and Dittrich applies it specifically to Heinrich's text, p. 589.

Given the implications of the outdoing topos, it makes sense to assume that the differences in the shift from the wedding to the knightng are a result of intentional juxtaposition of genres that reflect the writer's task or goal. By inserting into the romance an account of a feast he himself attended, Heinrich assumes the role of chronicler and adopts the tradition of the eyewitness accounts, a new type of Latin chronicle that became popular at the end of the eleventh century with the First Crusade.

Until the eleventh century, discussion of contemporary events was usually limited to epistolary texts but during the First Crusade, eyewitness accounts became widespread. Although in Latin, these chronicles were not intended primarily for posterity.³⁰ Instead they grew out of a desire to disseminate current information quickly, so that people might take pride in the achievements of their countrymen and, therefore, praise their leaders. Fulcher of Chartres explained the purpose of his *Historia hierosolymitana*: 'It is a joy to the living [...] when the deeds of brave men [...] are read from writings, or, committed to memory, are recited with prudence in the midst of the faithful'.³¹ He is careful to explain that he relates what he personally saw and experienced and also includes what eyewitnesses told him when he was not on the scene to view events himself. This was soon practised by almost all chroniclers. By the twelfth century, chroniclers, now less concerned with relating the details of the distant past, expanded their accounts of the contemporary period and regularly described the events they themselves witnessed.

Heinrich has appropriated the eyewitness account, but in the vernacular.³² This can be shown by comparing his summary of the Mainz events with the *Chronicon Hanoniense*. In contrast to Gislebert von Mons's extended report, Heinrich abbreviated his account of the festivities at the knightng to highlight only the essential elements.³³ The eyewitness report typically uses the first person voice, and the Mainz section gives the narrator new authority because he now needs no written source to confirm what he says. The frequency of pronouns directly addressing the audience places the narrator even more strongly in a performing situation. The repeated use of 'I' and 'we' involves the listeners directly, forcing them to assent or

³⁰ August Krey, 'Introduction', *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eye-witnesses and Participants* (Gloucester, MA: Smith, 1958), pp. 1–21 (p. 5).

³¹ Krey, p. 22.

³² The twelfth-century liking for eyewitness reports may account for Hermann of Thuringia's commissioning of the *Trojaroman* by Herbort von Fritzlar and placing it together with Heinrich von Veldeke's *Eneit* since the Dares and Diktys descriptions of the Trojan war were thought to be eyewitness reports at the time.

³³ Wolter's detailed study of the events in Mainz culled from several chronicle reports lists nine stages: coronation, procession, high mass, banquet, minstrel performances, official girding of the sword, presentation of gifts to participants (including minstrels), banquet, and mêlée, p. 196–97.

dissent as the narrator insists that his experience was also shared by those who now hear him recount what transpired. The direct address ‘I have never heard [...] except the one [...] we ourselves saw [so] we needn’t ask about it’ implies a public forum. As the narrator brings the audience into the narration, the Mainz section gains additional credibility. The eyewitness report turns the narrator, and by association, Heinrich himself into a performer who attends a great feast in order to comment on the event and assign it a place in history. In sum, if the shared competency and function of the knightly poet Heinrich and the minstrels are associated in the wedding scene only by analogy, then in this Mainz section, Heinrich actually speaks to the audience as a performer of *encomia*.

Heinrich and Gislebert de Mons share the same mission and follow the same rules. Both provide accurate information based on their own experience. They are concerned with a truthful retelling of events and, more importantly, with presenting their own correct or true interpretation. Both write more for contemporaries than for posterity, and these contemporaries also know what transpired because many of them attended the celebrations as well. Gislebert stresses the public display of generosity and the increase in dignity and respect it brings to the host and to all nobles who follow his example:

Principes enim et alii nobiles non solum pro dominorum suorum, scilicet imperatoris et eius filiorum honore, sed eciam pro sui proprii nominis fama dilatanda, largius sua erogabant.³⁴

[For the princes and other nobles spent their fortunes magnanimously not only to honour their masters, that is, the Emperor and his sons, but also to spread the fame of their own name.]

Heinrich focuses on essentially the same things. The extravagance of the feast gives Frederick so much public prestige that it secures his fame at least until Judgement Day:

diu was betalle unmâzlichen,

³⁴ The context is provided by the preceding sentence: *Feria secunda pentecostes, dominus Henricus rex Romanorum et Fredericus dux Suevorum, domini Frederici Romanorum imperatoris filii, novi ordinati sunt milites, proquorum honore ab ipsis et ab universis principibus et aliis nobilibus multa militibus captivis et cruce signatis et jocularibus et jocularicibus data sunt, scilicet equi, vestes preciose, aurum et argentum.* (On the second day of Pentecost week, Lord Heinrich, King of the Romans and Frederick, Duke of the Swabians, sons of Frederick, Emperor of the Romans became newly made knights. In their honour many things were given by them as well as by all the princes and by other nobles to the landless knights, to the crusader knights and to men and women minstrels, namely horses, rich vestments, gold and silver. Gislebert de Mons, *La Chronique*, pp. 156–57.) Mohr has discussed in detail the similarity of formulation between this text and Heinrich’s telling of the gift-giving by Eneas and his guests, ‘Feste’, p. 44.

dâ der keiser Friderîch
gab zwein sînen sunen swert,
dâ manech tûsent marke wert
verzeret wart und vergeben.
[...]
dem keiser Friderîche
geschach sô manech êre,
daz man iemer mêre
wunder dâ von sagen mach
unz an den jungisten tach (ll. 347, 21–40)

[It was immeasurably grand. Emperor Frederick bestowed upon his two sons the sword. At that feast many a thousand marks' worth was consumed or distributed.[...] Emperor Frederick accrued so much fame that people will be telling of its marvels until the Judgement Day.]

The correspondences between all three feast descriptions—the wedding of Eneas, and Heinrich's and Gislebert's Mainz accounts—point to the shared function already noted: to eulogize the host and create public renown for him by disseminating information about the opulence and generosity exhibited at his feast. The result is far-reaching fame. The success of the feast, reported by chroniclers and poet-minstrels, imparts honour to the host. This reputation, achieved through the efforts of the disseminators of information, attests to the success of the *translatio imperii*. The wealth and prestige displayed at Mainz presented in the context of the outdoing topos bolsters the narrator's implied point that Emperor Frederick I himself is the legitimate successor to the Roman emperors. Moreover Frederick surpasses them. Thus the author's insertion of this section on the Staufer rulers defines him as one of the people who composes and then disseminates by means of performance information in narrative form for contemporaries and posterity. It is then consistent that Heinrich further prophesies that the spoken and written word will keep Frederick's name alive for centuries: *ez wirt noch uber hundert jâr/ von ime gesaget und geschriben* (l. 348, 2).

To be effective, encomia require the rapid dissemination of epoch-making events. The mechanism for this, we are told, is the performance of poet-minstrels who comment on those events. They accomplish this mission with narratives and songs that expand a person's fame in the present and also transmit it to posterity. Using German, they reach a larger audience far more rapidly than chroniclers writing in Latin. Performers need not all use the same mode of presentation, nor the same language, but to be effective, they must be credible. The new eyewitness accounts provided the means to credibility. They lent a new significance to contemporary events for the interpretation of history, as we have seen in the Mainz excursus.³⁵ Thus the creator of a panegyric feast type scene, whether in chronicle, romance or song, has the power to magnify the fame and prestige of the ruler. In the process, he

³⁵ Dittrich, p. 592.

influences the contemporary and future interpretation of events, and therefore, of history.

Heinrich has attended an elaborate ceremony and sumptuous festivities, he subsequently travelled and described the affair as an eyewitness. His achievement then, is to augment the fame and power of Emperor Frederick I. In so doing, Heinrich has equated himself with minstrels because he accomplishes precisely what he says minstrels at Eneas's court are supposed to do after they leave—sing the praises of the king. Thus *laudatio* is the mission that Heinrich has in common with minstrels and chroniclers. By producing such feast descriptions, the poet-minstrel becomes the equal of the chronicler and enters the discourse of world history. Each eulogy after a grand feast assigns to the host his place in history. As minstrels continue to sing, they fulfil their own prophecy that the king's fame will endure until the Last Judgement.

The third part of the minstrel's task as outlined in *Eneit* is to ensure the host's fame in the future. How this can be accomplished is illustrated in the section immediately following the Mainz excursus. This is the genealogy.

Like chronicles and Virgil's *Aeneid*, the German *Eneit* also contains a genealogy, but this element, too has been adapted and reinterpreted in a unique way. In order to relate what happened after Aeneas's reign, Virgil supplied a genealogy in the form of prophetic information revealed by Anchises in the underworld. As a prophecy, it not only tells Aeneas what his destiny is, but informs him of the future glory of his successors. The author of the *Roman d'Eneas* changes the format. The prophecy remains in place but after Eneas's wedding and assumption of the throne, a second, cursory genealogy is given at the very end. Mentioning only Ascanius, Romulus and Remus, the text reminds the audience that all events occurred as Anchises had foretold.³⁶

Departing from the Virgilian and the French version, Heinrich has truncated most of Anchises's speech, leaving his prophecy vague. The genealogy itself he moved from the underworld context to the realm of the living narrator. It occurs after the Mainz section and after the point at which the narrator states that Eneas succeeded Latinus as king. Given the function of poets as assessors of historic events and creators of *fama*, the obvious purpose of a genealogical list located immediately after the Mainz description is to illustrate the power of eulogy in terms of its duration and truth, that is, its historical impact. With the addition of Christ to the list, Heinrich's

³⁶ *Ascanius regna après, / et puis fu si com Anchisés / a Eneas ot aconté/an enfer, et bien demonstré/les rois qui après lui vendroient, / si com il dist que il nestroient:/l' un avant l' altre ansi sont né, / com a son fil l' ot aconté.* [Ascanius ruled afterwards and then it was as Anchises had told Eneas in the underworld and as he had shown him the kings who would come after him, as he (had) said they would be born: thus they were born one after the other, (just) as he had told his son. ll. 10141–10148.] Cited according to the edition by Jean Jacques Salverda de Grave, *Eneas Roman du XIIe siècle* (Paris: Champion, 1983) and translation by Carleton W. Carroll, personal communication.

text corroborates what in the twelfth century was considered Virgil's prophetic vision of Christianity. Yet even without the prophetic aspect assigned to Virgil, his text gave to the newly crowned outsider, Eneas, renown that lasts until Barbarossa's time. Heinrich as interpretive translator is part of the chain of transmission. We find no hint in the text that he aspired to the status of a 'new' Virgil, but he is partly responsible for preserving Eneas's fame for his own and future generations. Moreover, because the text lauds Frederick I as having surpassed Eneas, his prominence and prestige are expected to survive even longer.

In the process of switching from the wedding to the Mainz celebration and then to the genealogy of Roman rulers, the narrator has shifted back and forth from past to present and to past again creating a non-linear temporal progression. The narrative relating Eneas's life, which is the major portion of the text, carries the reader along with the events in sequence since they form the present for Eneas, even though the events are related in the past tense and the audience knows that they occurred in the past. Direct discourse also contributes to the way in which the narrative places the past into the present experience of the audience. But with the introduction of the Mainz excursus, the narrative shifts to the immediate present still alive in the memory of the audience. When the topic then shifts from Mainz to the events which lie in the future for Eneas and Virgil (i.e. the advent of Christianity), the narrator presents a panoramic view of the succession of Roman emperors that for the audience constitutes the past.

From the perspective of Heinrich's contemporaries, the story of Eneas provides the experience of a past recreated in the present. The illusion of experiencing this past is then broken by the true or clearly identifiable present of Mainz. And finally, the focus turns to a survey of the past foundation upon which the contemporary events are built. The genealogy then places the events back into perspective by creating the temporal distance that separates the present of Eneas and the present of the audience. This temporal leap from the present to the succession of past generations makes tangible to the reader or audience the distance between Eneas and those who attended in Mainz, and forces the genealogy to be viewed from the perspective of the present of Heinrich's audience who knows what happened and knows that all Virgil predicted through the mouth of the underworld has come to pass. By purging the genealogy of its prophetic aspect as found in Virgil and the *Roman d'Eneas*, Heinrich objectifies the events for an audience who recognizes them as history. In so doing, he creates a sense of duration that returns the past to the past after it had been experienced in the present during the course of Eneas's story.

The connecting link between these three perspectives of time is the outdoing topos. These perspectives allow both of the logical implications inherent in the topos to be developed. In the first instance, the distancing of the past when the present suddenly intrudes forces a comparison of Eneas's and Frederick's feasts. The two celebrations are comparable although Frederick's is the greater. In fact, the topical comparison makes Frederick's celebration the ultimate measure of the degree of pomp and glory achieved at Eneas's wedding. In contrast, the distancing of the past

by listing the successive generations in the genealogy forces a recognition of the dissimilarity implied by the topos. The new Christian age surpasses the old. But more than that, in their basic nature the two empires are ultimately incomparable because Christianity produces a qualitatively different era. Although the Roman rulers, especially Julius Caesar and Augustus, are praised, the new era of Christianity appears to make possible new achievements since death has been overcome through the grace of God. Thus the genealogy places both Eneas and Frederick Barbarossa in the framework of world history showing the antique age superseded by the Christian, imperial one. This teleological view of history is supported by the non-linear narrative progression because it is open-ended. This allows the narrator to conclude the genealogy by looking to the future and praying that the Christian successors to Eneas and the Roman emperors may eclipse their predecessors.

The final statements in the Mainz section and the genealogy look to the future. The Mainz section ends with parallel statements that appear repetitive. In the first, the narrator acknowledges the fact that the future is unknown and cannot be narrated:

ich wâne alle die nû leben
deheine grôzer [Fest] haben gesehen.
ichn weiz waz noch sole geschehen,
desn kan ich ûch niht bereiten. (l. 347,26)

[I believe that no one alive has ever seen a greater feast. I do not know what is yet to happen. On that I cannot report.]

Given the openness and optimism with which this text views the future, these lines warrant the positive interpretation: although the future is unknown, it is likely to be better and more magnificent than even the present. In the concluding sentence, the narrator is more certain about what he can predict and consequently, more specific. He assures the reader that Frederick's fame will last more than a hundred years, but again leaves open the specific details about what has yet to be said of him: *ez wirt noch uber hundert jâr / von ime gesaget und gescriben, / daz noch allez is beliben* (348, 2–4).³⁷ [All that has been recounted of him] will be spoken and written about for over a hundred years to come, but we do not know what will be reported.] With this statement, the narrator apparently assumes that the judgement of contemporaries will be accepted in the future and only the details of the eulogy are as yet unknown.

Likewise, the prayer that completes the genealogy is appropriately encomiastic in requesting a blessing on the future because the poet can only insure the survival of someone's renown and cannot control future events. In this way, the genealogy

³⁷ Each of the editions (and manuscripts) phrases this slightly differently: *daz noch allez is beliben* (l. 348, 4 Etmüller); *Hie sin die rede nu bliben* (Gotha manuscript, l. 13252 in Frings/Schieb); and *dat noch allet is verholen bleven* (l. 13252, Frings/Schieb). John W. Thomas translates this: 'Over a century from now they will still be telling and writing accounts of it, but we cannot know what they will report', Heinrich von Veldeke, *Eneit* (New York: Garland, 1985), p. 150.

contributes to the narrative programme of the text that is to illustrate the glory of the Holy Roman Empire. At the same time, the genealogy marks the limits of the ability and function of the chronicler-poet-minstrel. He cannot control the future beyond establishing and sustaining a person's *fama*.

Heinrich von Veldeke's *Eneit* makes use of the historiographic tradition of chronicle and eyewitness report. The resulting amalgamation reflects the close affinity between historical and literary genres in twelfth-century Europe. When we view the text with an eye to its debt to tradition, we discover that the function of the poet-minstrel is also defined in part by these traditions, thereby revealing the way in which chronicle, epic and romance intersect. The three sections of the *Eneit* discussed above, all unique to Heinrich von Veldeke's reworking of the *Roman d'Eneas*, allow us to delimit the scope of the intersection. In the description of Eneas's wedding are prescribed the specific reporting activities of minstrels which bring honour to the court. The Mainz excursus demonstrates by means of the eyewitness format how the author fulfils the activities assigned to the minstrels in the wedding description and claims truth for his eulogizing account. The genealogy illustrates how successful a poet can be, because the exalted reputation he creates can last almost forever, as Eneas's fame has. Presented as historical fact rather than prophecy, the genealogy also updates the story of Eneas by placing it in a Christian, and therefore, world historical perspective. The minstrels are, therefore, shown to be legitimate evaluators of historical events because they all describe great court celebrations with the aim of giving the ruler a place in world history. However, this role can be fulfilled only when current events are considered a part of world history. As we shall see, Heinrich von dem Türlin shares this view of the poet-minstrel's role.

Like Heinrich von Veldeke, Heinrich von dem Türlin appears to have been a ministerial or possibly a burger in St Veit, Carinthia.³⁸ He too is referred to by his contemporaries as *meister*. Lewis Jillings has shown that Heinrich von dem Türlin also styled himself as a wayfaring singer-minstrel in his romance, *Crône* (c. 1230).³⁹ In several passages Heinrich explicitly engages in the polemics of the gnomic poets or *Spruchdichter*.⁴⁰ Here I am specifically interested in the way Heinrich presents a

³⁸ What is known about Heinrich von dem Türlin is summarized in *VL*, vol. 3, col. 894–99.

³⁹ Lewis Jillings, *The 'Crône' of Heinrich von dem Türlin: The Attempted Emancipation of Secular Narrative* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1980), p. 175.

⁴⁰ Jillings states, 'The succour and sustenance of knights is linked in *Diu Crône* to the theme of hospitality in a manner that is applicable also to the aspirations of the itinerant poet, for the narrator asserts his own presence most vigorously in connection with precisely these concerns', p. 168. He further argues that Heinrich is unique in that he involves himself in the polemics of the *Spruchdichter* by presenting a narrator who agrees that the nobility needs the services of the minstrels in order to expand his reputation and that the performers deserve to be well rewarded for their service, pp. 168–76. For an exploration of this mutual need between performer and host, see Chapter 6 below.

knightly poet-minstrel enhancing King Arthur's reputation in the *Crône*. The parallels indicate that the image of minstrel found in the *Eneit* at the inception of the romance genre continues to be shared by another knightly poet once the Arthurian romance is so well entrenched that it can be parodied.

Heinrich von dem Türlin portrays a parallel social context, a grand courtly feast held by Arthur at Christmas. As in all later Arthurian romances, the festivities are run according to fixed custom. One rule is that Arthur will not begin the banquet until an adventure (*aventüre*) or happening presents itself in some form. This desire for an adventure, it has been shown, provokes a disruption of the festivities and of the ideal harmony Arthur's court represents.⁴¹ In Heinrich's *Crône*, the first adventure becomes an inter-prandial game that nevertheless carries within it the potential to disgrace and destabilize the court.

As all await the adventure, a beautiful voice is heard singing, wending its way to the court. A very unusual-looking knight arrives. He is only about four feet tall, his skin is grey and studded with fish scales; his hair resembles fish fins. The steed he rides is seal in front and dolphin in the rear. This fish-knight is a messenger from King Priure who lives in the sea. Although a knight, he wears no armour, but proves himself skilled in the joust. As a king's messenger, he exhibits perfect courtly manners, is not angered even by Keie's prickly commentary, and defeats him handily in a joust. The fish-knight accepts Keie's challenge to a joust because he upholds to the letter the agreement made at the beginning when he stated his purpose: he has come to Arthur's court with a magic cup that tests everyone's fidelity in love. After all the ladies and all the gentlemen have been embarrassed, and Arthur is the only one who proves total fidelity by being able to drink from the cup, the fish-knight takes his leave speaking eloquently to Arthur:

Artûs, du bist ein krône
 Und ein spiegel aller êren.
 Ich wil von hinnen kêren,
 Und habet gnâde unde danc.
 Mîn wec ist vil starke lanc,
 Den ich noch rîten muoz.
 Lât mich haben iuvern gruoz,
 Urloup und hulde;
 Wan ir ein übergulde
 Gar aller tugende sît:
 Daz müeze wesen âne strît,
 Die wîle ich gereden mac.

⁴¹ 'Der Hof begehrt nach Konflikten, die in ihm aufgehoben werden sollen', according to Joerg Fichte, in *Feste*, ed. by Altenburg, p. 452. See also Thomas Gutwald's analysis of the conflicts created by the cup test and his description of the fish-knight, *Schwank und Artushof. Komik unter den Bedingungen höfischer Interaktion in der Crône des Heinrich von dem Türlin*, Mikrokosmos, 55 (New York: Lang, 2000), pp. 157–62.

Iu hât gevrumet dirre tac
 Vil gar an iuerm prise,
 Wan ich sîn manegen wîse,
 Der sîn ê niht enweste;
 Dâ mache ich in sô veste,
 Daz in niemen mac verwerten.
 Dîn lop wil ich beherten
 Immer swâ ich landes bin:
 Daz wirt iuwer êren gwin. (ll. 3110–30)⁴²

[Arthur, you are crown and mirror of all that is excellent. In taking my leave I wish to express my thanks and good wishes. The road I will ride is very long, so give me your greeting, favour and leave to depart. The fact that you are the epitome of all virtue shall remain uncontested as long as I am able to speak [in public]. This day [i.e. event] has contributed to your prestige because I shall make it known to many who have not yet heard it before. I shall make it [the fame of this event] so secure that no one can denigrate it. I want to magnify your renown wherever I go. That will redound to your fame.]⁴³

The mode of delivery here before Arthur appears to be a speech, but since it is in rhymed couplets, it can be sung as a song as well. In this speech the fish-knight fulfils the roles of a courtly knight, a messenger, and a minstrel in one. The fact that he carries messages from king to king, sings beautifully, and travels a great deal allows us to place him into the performer category. The job of envoy was often taken on by trustworthy minstrels as we have discovered from account books (see Chapter 4). Like the minstrels referred to in the *Eneit*, he attends a grand feast because he and his lord have heard of Arthur's renown and virtue. The knight then initiates the fidelity test and confirms for himself the dignity and merit of the famed Arthur. As he takes his leave, he praises the king publicly as the mirror of excellence and epitome of virtue.

But the laudatory content of the speech performed before the court is far shorter and less important than the promise he makes. He praises Arthur in four lines but requires a full third of the speech (eleven lines) to explain his own role in the affair. Here he makes Arthur a three-fold promise. First he promises to establish his

⁴² I cite according to Heinrich von dem Türlin, *Diu Crône*, ed. by Gottlob Heinrich Friedrich Scholl (1852; Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1966).

⁴³ I offer Thomas's translation for comparison: 'Arthur, crown and model of honor, receive my thanks and best wishes. I want to leave now, for the road I still must ride is very long; allow me to depart with your favor and a friendly greeting. That you are a pinnacle of all virtue will not be questioned as long as I can speak. This day will greatly increase your renown, for I shall praise your merit to many who have not yet heard of it and shall make your fame so secure that no one can harm it. Wherever I go I shall proclaim your excellence and thus add to the esteem in which you are held', *The Crown: A Tale of Sir Gawain and King Arthur's Court*. Heinrich von dem Türlin (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p. 36.

interpretation of the cup test as authoritative so that Arthur's renown will remain uncontested as long as our encomiast is able to speak in public. The fish-knight vows to base his future eulogy on his own experience at court and present wherever he goes an eyewitness evaluation of Arthur's success in the cup test.

Second he will spread knowledge of Arthur's achievement that day to all those who have not heard of it. Public knowledge of this praiseworthy event, so he promises, shall be made so secure and solid that no one can denigrate it in the future. Third he wants to confirm and magnify Arthur's fame. These three elements of observing and evaluating important cultural and political events and then disseminating that information far and wide is precisely the task outlined for minstrels by Heinrich von Veldeke. And as for the promise of sustaining the fame thus produced into the future, Heinrich von dem Türlin confirms the knightly minstrel's promise that the renown of the event will indeed continue into the future. The narrator then supports this expectation when he informs us that the events of this day are indeed talked about eagerly in castle and town during the remainder of the festivities (ll. 3190–204). Hence the emphasis in both texts is on disseminating a particular interpretation of the present in order to influence the future.

We are not told how the fish-knight will deliver his message, whether he will sing or recite. His speech before Arthur does not break in form from the rest of the romance. A short political panegyric could be composed and performed both for speaking (*sagen*) as William von Hildegaersberch or for singing to a melody as the *Spruchdichter* were accustomed to presenting. But either possibility certainly requires that this knightly or courtly minstrel will offer public performances of the message in an appealing form to large numbers of listeners during his extended travels. The fish-knight's minstrel service is particularly convincing because his laudatory poem serves as a model and because it is repeatable just like the songs of the *Spruchdichter* (as we shall see in the following chapters) and is performed with the expressed purpose of securing the event in public memory. Consequently, with only very minor changes (primarily in pronouns) the fish-knight and others can sing it anywhere.

The significance of such encomia for the host is readily apparent here. The fish-knight in his speech reassures Arthur about his interpretation of the fidelity test. And this reflects also on the entire court. It would be possible for the minstrel to relate exactly what happened, that is, that all the courtiers and ladies failed the test except Arthur, and he could even mention names like Gawain. Instead, he promises to focus on Arthur's achievement, maintaining the image of the illustrious *primus inter pares*. Arthur's success thus stands for the entire court so that as the minstrel praises Arthur in his travels, he salvages everyone's reputation. Thus Heinrich's narrator reveals to his audience what the fish-knight's audiences will not know, that his commentary puts a better face on the situation by suppressing certain details, while keeping the story factually accurate. The audiences within the romance will base their evaluation and esteem of Arthur on the panegyrics the fish-minstrel presents. His version will

be repeated and remembered by future generations. And no member of Arthur's court will ever contradict him.

The fish-knight's role in capsule form describes one typical context in which encomia and event songs are composed. This process, as the fish-knight demonstrates, allows the minstrel to present his own specific version of events, and on occasion, to suppress uncomplimentary details. A second literary example of this process taken from the *Klage* is instructive. This text, like the *Crône* follows a story being created within a story and emphasizes a specific interpretation of a significant event in order to affect the future.

Jan-Dirk Müller has examined the *Klage*, the sequel to the *Nibelungenlied*, that relates the response to the demise of the Burgundians at Etzel's (Attila's) court.⁴⁴ In this sequel Schwämmel, Etzel's minstrel, functions as reporter of news and historian as he tells of the heroic deaths in the great conflict. Schwämmel's oral report of the disaster is comparable to the shaping of history by eyewitness singers like Heinrich von Veldeke and the fish-knight in the *Crône*. The singer's credibility is in each case built on the eyewitness report. Schwämmel also has additional claims to credibility: he is sent by the well-known King Etzel, is recognized in his own right as emissary and minstrel (in *Nibelungenlied*), and knows how to create a credible account. In the *Crône* the audience hears the fish-knight express in his panegyric to Arthur exactly what he has seen and what he will tell of it, that is, what will be remembered. In the *Klage* Schwämmel fulfils the historian's function in the same way. The readers or audience witness his rehearsal of the events privately to Bishop Pilgrim in Passau first, then to Brunhild, and finally, publicly to the entire Burgundian court. Upon returning to Passau, he is expected to relate the event fully to the Bishop's scribes so that they can create a permanent written Latin account for posterity.

Jan-Dirk Müller interprets the narrative relating Schwämmel's story as heroic matter in the process of being shaped into an epic song. Since the Bishop's written Latin version becomes the official, authorized history, Müller sees it superseding the activity of '*singen und sagen*' by the poet-minstrel.⁴⁵ I contend, however, that the oral history or epic song is far more potent as described in *Klage* because it lives on in frequent and widespread repetitions. The result is that the minstrel's version becomes authenticated and codified by means of the retelling. As the repeated performances disseminate a singer's version of the events, the rapid spread of the story or history eliminates a need for a text. This means that from a performance perspective, the *historia* in Latin has limited reception possibilities whereas Schwämmel's tale or epic song reaches a far greater audience. Therefore, all three accounts discussed thus far—Heinrich, the fish-knight and Schwämmel—establish

⁴⁴ Jan-Dirk Müller, 'Der Spielmann erzählt. Oder: Wie denkt man sich das Entstehen eines Epos?' in *Erzählungen in Erzählungen. Phänomene der Narration in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. by Harald Haferland and Michael Mecklenburg (Munich: Fink, 1996), pp. 85–98.

⁴⁵ Müller, 'Spielmann', pp. 95–96.

by means of performance a collective memory of the event. Schwämmel's version becomes the most widely disseminated and consequently best-accepted account. It constructs public memory. The alternative history, namely the authoritative Latin text, for all its erudition, multiple sources verifying the events, and permanence can not have the broad and immediate reception the minstrel's tale enjoys.

Since the chroniclers, minstrels and poet-singers control the degree of *fama* and prestige the ruler receives, one might say they are actually 'king-makers' because the event itself requires an interpreter to assign it value. To create a reputation entails, as Heinrich von Veldeke, Heinrich von dem Türlin, and the *Klage* demonstrate, attending contemporary events, evaluating them for memory either in the form of eulogy or history, and then integrating them into the Christian historical framework by means of performance. This control then enables singers to make self-fulfilling predictions. For example, the comment that people will continue to talk about the feast and praise Emperor Frederick until the Last Judgement carries a promise, not an empty prophecy. Because Heinrich has embedded the Mainz section in a vernacular text of Virgil's *Aeneid*, he is actually ensuring both Eneas's and Frederick's timeless eminence. The fish-minstrel in *Crône* promises the same for Arthur in an encomium that stresses the importance of rapid and widespread dissemination in fulfilling the promise. Finally, the very form of the German *Eneit* testifies to the success of narrative and song in providing the ruler with a place in history. Heinrich has positioned a tribute to Frederick I next to a feast type scene also of his own devising, implying thereby that poets and writers have dominion over the changing forms that maintain the fame of rulers thus celebrated. The third example is the report of a disastrous conflict by the eyewitness minstrel. Schwämmel's account sets into memory an event that gives the Burgundians a heroic identity and legitimacy as heirs to those who lost their lives in Etzel's land.

The examples show that minstrels are capable of carrying out what they promise. First, the eyewitness argument gives them credibility, and second, they have the advantage of being able to transmit their message rapidly to a relatively large number of people. The dissemination occurs by means of performance, whether by speaking or singing, and is experienced by hearing and seeing. Thus it is the performances that ensure the fulfilment of the minstrel's mission for society.

The next chapter considers the polemics of the itinerant singers or *Spruchdichter* whose verses reinterpret the pejorative phrase *guot umb êre nemen* (taking material rewards in return for public renown) to justify the services they perform. Then I examine the gift-giving scenes in a number of romances that demonstrate ample demand for their services.



Fig. 3. Fiddler, Initial I from the *Magnum legendarium austriacum*, c. 1200–1300, cod. 24, folio 114^r, Stiftsbibliothek Zwettl, reproduced by permission of the Institut für Realienkunde, Austrian Academy of Sciences.

ich spriche: ich bin ein lerer aller guoten dinge,
unt bin ein ratgebe aller tugent, ich hazze schande.

We dem, der mir eren vergunne!
ich bin vürsten dienest, uf gnade lied ich singe

Meissner

Ein lop daz uz der künde vert,
daz hat der wisen volge in allen landen.

Bruder Wernher

CHAPTER SIX

Negotiating the Presents: Ritual Aspects of Gift-Giving

Thus far we have seen evidence from Heinrich von Veldeke and Heinrich von dem Türlin that minstrels play a significant role in glorifying their hosts and praising grand courtly feasts. If minstrels actually do provide their patron with lasting reputation which in turn secures his power, then the patron needs the minstrel as much as the minstrel needs him. Since these two poets are not the only ones to mention the minstrels and their role as purveyors of *fama*,¹ we must now turn

¹ The role of the poet as encomiast and builder of reputation has long been recognized. See for example, Paul Kluckhohn, 'Berufungsbewußtsein und Gemeinschaftsdienst des deutschen Dichters im Wandel der Zeiten', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift*, 14 (1936), 1–30, and Hans Steinger, 'Fahrende Dichter im deutschen Mittelalter', *DVjs*, 8 (1930), 61–79. But until recently, scholars have failed to differentiate adequately between the functions of the Germanic scop and medieval poet since the social organization changed so drastically from the Germanic to the feudal period. For more recent work that does distinguish the two in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century texts, see Schreier-Hornung; Kurt Franz, *Studien zur Soziologie des Spruchdichters in Deutschland im späten 13. Jahrhundert*, GAG, 111 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1974); also Klaus von See's comparison with the skaldic tradition,

to other literary voices and ask to what extent the view presented in the last chapter is representative for the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Several literary genres offer signs of reciprocal interaction between patron and minstrel. Indeed the polemic in lyric and didactic songs delineates a complex relationship of service.² The category of gnomic poetry (*Spruchdichtung*)³ consists of short single-verse songs with melodies; the verses can be recombined in any number of ways according to audience and performer preference. Composed and performed by *Spruchdichter*, they comment on politics, contemporary events and rulers, religion, ethics, and the poet-singer's way of life.⁴ As Meissner (above) states: 'I am a teacher of all honourable things and an advisor for all virtues; I hate disgrace. Woe to him who deprives me of good repute! I serve the nobility and sing for their freely given gifts'.⁵ In the section below I attempt to specify the nature of the service relationship in the songs of these itinerants.

Skaldendichtung (Munich: Artemis, 1980), Chapters 7 and 8, and, most recently, Helmut Tervoreen.

² See my earlier discussion of the complexities in this relationship, 'Beschenkungs politik und die Erschaffung von Ruhm am Beispiel der fahrenden Sänger', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 26 (1992), 353–67.

³ Terms for this genre vary, most frequent are *Spruchdichtung*, *Sangverslyrik*, *Sangspruchdichtung*. See Ulrich Müller's definitions comparing the German songs to comparable songs in other European languages, like the Provençal *sirventes*, 'Sangspruchdichtung', in *Aus der Mündlichkeit in die Schriftlichkeit: Höfische und andere Literatur. 750–1320*, ed. by Ursula Liebertz-Grün (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1988), pp. 185–92 (pp. 185–86). See Tervoreen's book-length summary of forms, themes, music, manuscript transmission, and style and most recently, Horst Brunner and Helmut Tervoreen's Introduction in *Neue Forschungen zur mittelhochdeutschen Sangspruchdichtung* (*ZfdPh*, Sonderheft 119, 2000), pp. 1–9. Hereafter each article is cited by author as a journal article.

⁴ The repertoire of the *Spruchdichter* is incredibly diverse and includes allegorical, religious, biblical and learned material from bestiaries, sermons and other written sources.

⁵ Meissner, *HMS*, III: p. 103, xv, 4. Of course, we cannot accept every statement in the didactic song corpus as literal, biographic fact. Nevertheless, this genre of songs deals consistently with the social reality of the poet's time and with the conditions that determine his performances; and so it is legitimate to cull information about the performance context from the texts themselves. See Eva Kiepe-Willms who draws even personal biographical information from these texts, 'Sûs lêret Herman Dâmen. Untersuchungen zu einem Sangspruchdichter des späten 13. Jahrhunderts', *ZfdA*, 107 (1978), 33–49 (p. 40) and Johannes Rettelbach who remains skeptical, 'Abgefeimte Kunst: Frauenlobs "Selbstströmung"', in *Lied im deutschen Mittelalter. Überlieferung, Typen, Gebrauch. Chiemsee-Colloquium 1991*, ed. by Cyril Edwards, Ernst Hellgardt, and Norbert Ott (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996), pp. 177–93 (p. 192).

Guot Umb Êre

The literary discussion surrounding the minstrel's activities is most frequently formulated in the phrase also found in legal texts: *guot umb êre nemen* (to accept material goods in exchange for public prestige).⁶ This formula defines as a class all minstrels be they musicians, singers, jugglers or other types of entertainers but is used explicitly by the *Spruchdichter* to identify themselves. As a legal definition, it classifies entertainers among the dishonourable trades because minstrels accept material compensation for their work. The designation of dishonourable trade at once limited their legal capacity and social status, and, therefore, diminished their credibility. If their legal oaths were not accepted then how would listeners believe their encomia?

The formula recurs with such frequency that it appears to reflect a consensus in attitude toward the minstrels and has for this reason been deemed a valuable source of information. And its use in legal texts gives an even stronger impression of objectivity and clarity. But unfortunately, this misleadingly simple phrase masks the complexity of the service relationship: the formula expresses a basic relationship of reciprocity between patron and minstrel, and thus determines the latter's status and function. Thus the central issue is that both parties accept obligations. Important for my purpose here is that the itinerant singers frequently identify themselves with this phrase and its variants, and this justifies studying how this phrase applies specifically to the literary minstrels (*Spielleute*) mentioned in romance and gnomic poetry.

Surveying the use of the formula for approximately one hundred and twenty years from Veldeke's *Eneit* to the end of the thirteenth century, Franz Bäuml has described its several permutations and delineated their semantic range.⁷ The phrase does more than define the minstrel class as Bäuml makes clear: since the nineteenth century it has been understood to describe 'an attitude toward the activities of the *Spielleute*'.⁸ At first this gnomic phrase was neutral, designating the minstrels in general, then it came to be used in a pejorative sense directed against the minstrels, and finally, was imbued with positive ethical value. This entire spectrum of meanings is found in the verses of the itinerant *Spruchdichter*. The result is that this formula becomes the

⁶ This formulaic designation for strolling performers is found in a great number of legal texts. For example: *Schwabenspiegel in der ältesten Gestalt*, ed. by Wilhelm Wackernagel (Aalen: Scientia, 1972), pp. 16, 30–32; *Das Wiener Stadtrechts- oder Weichbildbuch*, ed. by Heinrich Maria Schuster (Vienna: Manz'schen Buchhandlung, 1873), Art. 108, p. 104; *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Hildesheim*, ed. by Richard Döbner and Herman Brandes (1880; Aalen: Scientia, 1980), no. 548, 147. See my section on 'Territorial Customary Law' in Chapter 2 above for details on the minstrel's legal status.

⁷ For the following discussion I draw heavily on Franz Bäuml, "'Guot umb êre nemen"' and Minstrel Ethics', *JEGP*, 59 (1960), 173–83. See also Joachim Bumke, *Kultur*, pp. 697–98.

⁸ Bäuml, 'Guot', p. 173.

pivotal metaphor in an ethically charged polemic. Alongside the neutral use, we find examples of a clearly positive and a clearly negative attitude toward the activities of minstrels throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The attitudes implied in the ethically loaded variants of the formula reflect values, sometimes the values of minstrels and sometimes those of courtiers or hosts. They, therefore, carry implications for the status and social function of entertainers. Different genres typically voice different attitudes. The romance genre depicts the court feast and describes in detail the courteous treatment of minstrels, an ideal picture in which the nobility can view itself as munificent. *Minnesang* rarely deals with the issue although the watchman is present in the background of every dawn song.⁹ In contrast, didactic poetry contains representatives of both the endorsing and the disapproving attitudes. When the *Spruchdichter* engage in their polemics, they re-design the phrase for their own advantage and base their discussion on something closer to the actual dictates of their performing lifestyle. Although performance practice and treatment of performers could vary greatly with hosts, and with changing social occasions, it is highly likely that minstrel complaints about rude and contemptuous treatment were true. Some of these poems offer a self-reflective, self-defining picture indicating how the minstrels viewed themselves and how others viewed them.

The formula goes through several transformations as it feeds the developing polemic surrounding the nature of the transaction. Bäuml notes that the earliest occurrences of the phrase with *umb* (in exchange for) are neutral denoting the minstrel class and connoting an exchange. This interpretation, that reciprocity is the key concept here, was first suggested by Moriz Haupt: *für gespendete ehre, gespendetes lob, lohn nehmen* (to accept payment for public prestige delivered).¹⁰ The *umb* thus indicates that minstrels exchange public prestige or renown for material goods. Haupt felt that material reward was received in exchange for freely offered public show of reverence. This implies that the arrangement is a social contract initiated by the itinerant minstrel but then freely entered by each person. Presumably, both parties also gain from this. The broader context of the *Spruchdichtung* in which poets like Kelin (fl. 1250–87) and Frauenlob (fl. 1270–1318) allude to the metaphor in several poems, corroborates the existence of the relationship and the mutual obligations.¹¹ Rumelant von Schwaben (c. 1250–1300) states explicitly the function of both parties stressing that the contract always implies

⁹ Heinrich von Frauenberg's dawn song shows the watchman-singer requesting separate payment (MHG *solt*) for his wake-up service, *HMS*, I: p. 95, I.

¹⁰ Moriz Haupt is cited according to Bäuml, p. 173.

¹¹ Numerous examples could further illustrate the minstrels' acknowledgement of the reciprocal arrangement: Rumelant von Sachsen: [...] *daz sie gedenken miner kunst, ich denke ir milte* [...] so that they hold my art in fond memory and I their generosity, *HMS*, III, p. 59: IV, 23); also Kanzler, *KLD*, I: II, 4, p. 188; Reinmar der Vidler, *KLD*, I: I, 2, p. 334.

an ethical commitment: *Swer gabe git, so man ir gert ./ diu gabe stet ze lobene wol* (When someone gives a gift that many a [minstrel] desires, it is fitting that this gift be properly credited).¹² The possibility for mutual benefit is the motivation for a contract that regulates co-operation between members of two different classes. This may be called mutualism in so far as neither can survive *as successfully* alone. Yet to be examined are the ramifications of this relationship, that is, how the reciprocity functions and what the parties gain. Even though the poet-singers produce a positive image for themselves, this relationship never becomes one of equal partners.

Although applied clearly to minstrels, the formula designates a single but inhomogeneous class. At the same time, it implies two parties of different social rank interacting and shows the minstrels in a service role with respect to the higher ranking, munificent donor. It expresses the minstrel's perspective in the directionality of the verbs *nemen* and *geben* to the extent that they refer to what the minstrels receive or give. The phrase, therefore, identifies the poet-performers as those individuals who enter into a specific situation of serving in which they provide fame to a host or patron. Thus, both parties must participate for the exchange to be accomplished, but because of their difference in status, they take part in different degrees. For example, the host's participation in the mutual exchange may characterize him, but it does not define him. It does, however, define the minstrel class. To the extent that the minstrels are defined by their participation in the transaction, they have no functional existence without the host or the reciprocal arrangement.

Although the phrase continues to be used neutrally as a class designation until the end of the thirteenth century, a negative phrase with *für* (for) is in concurrent use. The change in prepositions completely alters the transaction. In contrast to *umb*, the use of the preposition *für* implies substitution.¹³ When *für* is used, it invariably occurs with *nemen* (to accept) giving the minstrels the appearance of being greedy, and ready to relinquish social status and legal rights. The pejorative version of the formula has most influenced scholarship as an expression of minstrel greed and is familiar to us in Wilhelm Grimm's translation, *Ehre für äusseren vorteil und gewinn aufgeben*, (to relinquish honour for the sake of advantage and material gain).¹⁴ Grimm is critical of the minstrels because they relinquish their own public reputation for material reward and profit.¹⁵ We must be careful, however, not to lose

¹² Rumelant von Schwaben, *HMS*, III. p. 68:2.

¹³ Bäuml, 'Guot', p. 175.

¹⁴ Wilhelm Grimm's definition is based only on pejorative contexts and has caused subsequent scholars to think that minstrels were greedy because they appear to value the remunerations more than the renown they provide. See 'Über Freidank', in *Kleinere Schriften*, ed. by Gustav Hinrichs (Berlin: Dümmler, 1881), vol. 4, pp. 71–72.

¹⁵ Here we see the romantic concept of the free artist-poet who serves only the muses, not mammon, influencing Grimm's evaluation. We need to view this not as greed on the part of minstrels, but as an expression of the status of those who work or serve for money.

sight of the fact that two distinct categories—the one social and the other ethical—are at play here, and we should not conflate them in our analysis as Grimm’s translation does. Just what kind of reputation or renown is at stake for two unequal parties is discussed in greater detail below.

The polemical debate emerged gradually. According to Bäuml, the pejorative meaning developed as *Minnesinger* began to try to discredit the *Spruchdichter*.¹⁶ This is problematic because, as Bäuml also admits, a number of *Minnesinger* as well as all *Spruchdichter* relied on *guot umb êre*. If members of both groups are characterized by the same activity, we have no way to distinguish them.¹⁷ For this reason, once the phrase becomes a metaphor in the polemic, it no longer provides any concrete information about minstrel actions and functions. Another suggestion is that the pejorative use points to a growing competition between poets in general as Kelin phrases it: *eren koufaere ist niht vil, verkoufaere ist genuok*.¹⁸ There is yet a better suggestion. Hannes Kästner has asked who might be in competition with poet-minstrels? He has demonstrated with ample evidence that when mendicant preachers were charged with providing moral education to the laity in the vernacular, they stepped into direct competition with gnomic poet-singers. Until the rise of the mendicant orders, these wayfaring poet-singers were the primary source of information, and didactic and artistic presentations of parables, legends, songs, and narratives in all venues. Not only did the preachers threaten the survival of minstrels by discrediting them, but they also borrowed performative techniques from them. Kästner cites several criticisms of preachers like Frauenlob’s attack: *Schamt iuch, minner orden* (shame on you, mendicant order).¹⁹

As the polemic intensifies, the formula becomes less of a definition and more a metaphor for the minstrel’s moral laxity. Preachers applied the Church polemic freely as we saw with Berthold von Regensburg. The circulation of a pejorative connotation to the formula, now a metaphor referring to those who are morally inferior, naturally places the minstrels in a defensive position. The most frequent indictment was that giving to minstrels was a sin. In their responses the poet-singers like Friedrich von Sonnenburg turn the tables on the friars: *Swer giht, der guot umbe*

¹⁶ Bäuml, ‘Guot’, pp. 178.

¹⁷ There is no clear-cut distinction between *Minnesinger* and *Spruchdichter* except that members of the nobility did not compose *Spruchdichtung*. See Ulrich Müller, ‘Sangspruchdichtung’, p. 188.

¹⁸ Kelin, *HMS*, III: p. 22, II, 4.

¹⁹ Hannes Kästner, “‘Sermo Vulgaris’ oder “Hövischer Sanc”. Der Wettstreit zwischen Mendikantenpredigern und Wanderdichtern um die Gunst des Laienpublikums und seine Folgen für die mittelhochdeutsche Sangspruchdichtung des 13. Jahrhunderts (Am Beispiel Bertholds von Regensburg und Friedrichs von Sonnenburg)”, in *Wechselspiele. Kommunikationsformen und Gattungsinterferenzen mittelhochdeutscher Lyrik*, ed. by Michael Schilling and Peter Strohschneider, GRM Beiheft, 13 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, Winter, 1996), pp. 209–243. Frauenlob is cited according to Kästner, p. 237.

ere gebe / daz der sich sünde sere ./ der liuget oder ez sündet der / der aller meist da git. [Whoever states that the giver of a gift in return for public prestige sins seriously, [that claimant] lies unless he who (God) gives the most sins as well.]²⁰

One of the accusations that constantly needed addressing was that minstrels lose their reliability and freedom to sing as they choose when paid by a patron.²¹ To counter this, minstrels argued that genuine art requires honesty and integrity.²² Zilies von Sayn (c. 1250–1300), referred to in manuscripts as *Meister*, emphasizes that minstrels must be truthful, and if they are not, they invalidate their song:

Erne kan niht singen, swer da schiltet lobebæren man,
 und ouch einen lobet da bi, der scheltens wære wert;
 Also getaner kunst ich minen [guoten] vriunden niht ne gan,
 des han ich mich al mine tage unz her vil wol erwert.
 Ichne wil[le] niht umb ein kleinez guot loben einen boesen wiht,
 noch schelten einen biderben man, al ne gæbe er mir niht;
 swer loben unde schelten wil, der sol die volge han:
 hat er der niht, er hat an si[ne]me sange unmeisterliche tan.

[A person just doesn't know how to sing if he castigates a praiseworthy man and also praises one who is blameworthy. I don't accept that kind of art from my good friends. All my days I have completely avoided such things. I won't praise a wicked man for a simple fee, nor will I censure an upright one even if he were to give me nothing. Whoever intends to praise and blame must also follow suit; if he does not, he produces amateurish songs.]²³

Zilies claims that the singer must be truthful in his praise otherwise his songs and his own artistic mastery, his *Meisterschaft*, lose meaning. Pride in one's work and integrity he thereby connects with artistic production when he points out his moral independence. His fee is small in comparison to the artistic quality and credibility he claims for himself and his friends. Although we know Zilies made his living as a

²⁰ Friedrich von Sonnenburg, Song 68 cited according to *Die Sprüche Friedrichs von Sonnenburg*, ed. by Achim Masser (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1979).

²¹ The common criticism, that a minstrel can be bought like a vanity press and is constrained in his artistic endeavours because he is paid continues to be accepted by a few modern scholars. Walter Salmen claims that buying artists, as patrons do, limits creativity (a modern idea) and interprets many of the references by poets as proving that the minstrel speaks according to the whim of the patron, *Musiker*, p. 141. The ethical frame presented by the poet-minstrels challenges this last criticism. For them the need for payment and the directives given by the patron foster integrity and do not detract from the literary value of their works.

²² Zilies von Sayn (*HMS*, III, p. 25: II, 2) and Kanzler make the same argument (*KLD*, I: I, 2, p. 185). Bruder Wernher also finds it necessary to assure his audience that he has integrity and praises only those who are worthy (*HMS*, II, p. 230: 14).

²³ Zilies von Sayn, *HMS*, III, p. 25: II, 2.

performer, he presents himself as too proud to distort or lie about someone's virtue.²⁴ The last two lines appear somewhat ambiguous at first glance. But if I translate *der sol die volge han* as '[he] must also agree to the rules' it indicates that the poet-minstrel must follow the rules of encomiastic song that are presumably set by the singers themselves.

Therefore, the poet-minstrels refuse to forfeit self-respect and credibility simply because they accept fee for service. Instead, they respond by adding an ethical dimension to the debate: they introduce God into the equation, thus laying the foundation for the ethical rehabilitation of their activities. Once the poet-minstrels establish their alliance with God, they pointedly invert the status of performer and audience. By playing on another phrase typically designating minstrels as suppliants (*gernde liute*), the courtiers are suddenly revealed to be the truly needy ones because they require the services of the minstrels in order to gain public prestige.²⁵ Kelin is one of the poets to reverse the attribute, *gernde* (needy), for in his poem, the needy are the patrons (*der êre gernden*), and not the minstrels. This exchange of the adjective and of the distinctive position of suppliant valorizes the minstrels, and with the inclusion of God in the alliance, the conferral of *êre* (public prestige) by the minstrel even becomes a pious act. According to Kelin then, the performer accepts gifts not for their value, but for the sake of the donor:

Ich bin der ein, der alsus guot enpfahet,
und mich der eren gernden gabe niht versmahet;
swer sie anders nimt, wan ich, daz ist ein ungevuok.
Ich nim der edelen guot durch Got, daz er ez in selbe lone,
unt dank' ez in hie vor leien unt vor pfaffen.

[I am one of those who accepts material goods in this manner, and do not disdain the gift of those in need of public prestige (*êre*). Whoever accepts them in any other way than I, commits folly. I accept the gifts of nobles because of God, so that he may reward them for it. And I thank them for it [the gift] here in front of laity and priests alike.]²⁶

By stressing the need of patrons, Kelin constructs his own merit on his ability to satisfy that need. His picture of the relationship places a small, needy donor beside a minstrel of enlarged stature as the magnanimous intermediary who accepts gifts for the benefit of his host's prestige and future salvation. Based on the minstrel's alliance with God, his service to the noble host can be considered analogous to the role of the patron saint who, as intercessor, recommends the donor to the Deity.

Der Unverzagte (c. 1250–1300) embellishes this picture further. He explicitly defines himself as one of three agents, the patron, performer, and God who are

²⁴ VL, vol. 10, col. 1554.

²⁵ Bäuml, 'Guot', p. 181.

²⁶ Kelin, HMS, III, p. 22, II, 4.

linked together in a contractual relationship. In this contract, the host's generosity is rewarded by God and by the minstrel's panegyrics:

Ich bin ein gast den vrenden liuten unde ein wirt der sinne,
unt suoche nach der vrage manigen richen edelen man;
In gastes wis ich jares maniges edelen guot gewinne.
Nu danke im Got, wer guot durch Got umb ere teilen kan!
Den selben wil ich rilich lob mit mime sange schenken,
Swie verre ich var in vrendiu lant, ze guote [ich] ir gedenken:
die gar vershamten argen zagen laz ich min[e]s lobes vri;
ir laster wil ich machen breit, wie stille ich in der künde bi in si.

[I am the guest of people who don't know me and the host of understanding, and seek out, on demand, many a powerful nobleman. Year after year, I earn the gifts of noble lords as a wayfarer. Now may God reward him who knows how to dispense goods in exchange for fame in God's name. On this very person I shall bestow praise abundantly with my song. Wherever I go in unfamiliar lands, I remember them publicly to their advantage. [But] I refuse to praise the completely shameless, wicked, and cowardly; their own vices I shall publicize widely, however quiet I am in their neighbourhood.]²⁷

The poet-singer plays the pivotal role of apprizing God of a deserving donor. His assurance of understanding implies his ability to discern virtuous hosts and underscores his information-gathering and intermediary function. Located centrally, the key phrase, *nu danke im Got*, addresses God in a third person imperative to inform and advise God whom to reward.

In both poems the bilateral exchange has been expanded into a new trilateral one, comprised of God, the minstrel, and the host. This reinterpretation of the *guot umb ere* metaphor supports the minstrel-patron relationship when it creates an opportunity for the host to make a pious gift that will be rewarded by God. But more importantly, it lends stature and veracity to the minstrel: since the reward is accepted for the sake of the donor, it credits the minstrel with Christian charity and identifies him as a trustworthy servant of God.²⁸ Consequently the lords are beholden to the minstrels for giving them the opportunity to display magnanimity. Thus on the basis of this polemic, minstrels claim for themselves a valuable Christian function.

²⁷ Der Unverzagte, *HMS*, III, p. 45: III, 4.

²⁸ Examples of this kind can be multiplied. For example, in his praise poem of Ludwig I of Bavaria, Walther von der Vogelweide claims to know what God will do for his fame (L. 18, 15). Additional examples in which the singer and the patron enter the relationship for God's sake are Meissner II, 11 (*HMS*, III, p. 90: II, 11); Marner XV, 4 in *Der Marner*, ed. by Philipp Strauch and Helmut Brackert (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965), p. 116; Frauenlob X, 10 in *Leichs, Sangsprüche, Lieder*, ed. by Karl Stackmann and Karl Bertau (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), p. 528.

Once *Spruchdichter* like Kelin and Der Unverzagte place themselves within this specific ethical-theological frame, they can well claim to perform a valuable service by shifting the focus of the formula to stress the needs and wants of those who receive *êre*. In such poems then the negative connotation of *guot für êre* undergoes semantic reassessment—the phrase is valorized and given an ethically positive slant. The positive side presents the minstrel as a servant of God who makes it possible for others to be generous. Higher aspirations and greater credibility are hardly possible. This theme, that art serves God, is ever more emphatically rehearsed as the thirteenth century progresses. From the patron's perspective it behooves each host to support not only singers who praise them but also the poems in which these singers elevate themselves. With their credibility raised, the singers can exalt their benefactors all the more.

Although the evidence cited derives from extant literary texts, the polemic describing mutualism in the *guot umb êre* metaphor is not solely a literary fiction. In cases where the terms of the contract were met satisfactorily, the panegyrics sung conferred greater power to the lord, and the gifts dispersed meant survival to the minstrel. Hence this mutualism is the mechanism that fulfils the key social function of establishing the reputations of individuals and families within the ruling classes. It serves the requirements of communication from court to court, between courts and cities, and between members of different parts of society. Potentially all servants provide communication links between groups, but poet-performers are conceivably more effective because they are more articulate than many a servant, and their travels bring them into contact with a larger number of people. Mutualism also serves the arts in that it enables poet-performers to create and disseminate their performances.

Therefore, we must accept the evidence of the songs that society supported a certain mutual agreement by which performers earned their livelihood, even if not every wealthy individual or court participated. The mechanism of mutual exchange may have functioned idiosyncratically and, therefore, badly, but the poets also attest to instances where they were satisfied with the compensation and audience reception. Complaints by several poets, including Walther von der Vogelweide prove only that individuals had different experiences at various times and at different venues.

The self-assured, moral stance the *Spruchdichter* expressed in their poems is consistent with their claims. If they claim the knowledge and intellect to pass judgement on the praiseworthy, then the claim also applies to the blameworthy. Aware of their contribution, they maintain authority and self-respect as they voice their expectations and demands for remuneration. Friedrich von Sonnenburg (fl. 1250–75), speaking for minstrels as a whole, stresses their decency and moral prerogative to demand material remuneration.²⁹ Meissner (fl. 1230–67) does not beg

²⁹ Masser, p. 67. This Sonnenburg poem is interpreted by Kästner as a direct response to Berthold von Regensburg and becomes an integral part of the poet's defence against

either, but divides the potential patrons into the virtuous and the wicked implying right from the first line that although he suffers penury, his moral appraisals of prospective patrons have significant consequences. He expects remuneration only from those who, because of their virtue, deserve his lauds. But on those who are not praiseworthy he does not spare opprobrium:

Min kumber weret mir ze lange;
 daz ist mir schedelich unde ist mir swaere,
 sol ich sus bi richer kunst verarmen unt verderben.
 Ich kan mit sprüchen und mit sange
 gewirden wol, die mir sint helfebaere:
 den tugendelosen bin ich gram, den wünsche ich, daz sie sterben.
 Ouch bite ich keinen erelosen niht, der hie lebet lesterliche,
 ich weiz wol, daz mir niemen git, erne si gar tugenden riche.
 waz solde mir eines schalkes gabe?
 des guotes ger ich niht, noch siner habe:
 den schilte ich, daz er stinket wirs, dan ein vuler rabe.

[My worries continue too long; it is painful and pernicious if I must fall into penury and die when my art is so masterful. I know how to bestow dignity with [learned] verses and songs on those who support me: with the wicked I am incensed; I wish them death. I also avoid those without reputation who live in vice. I well know that no one except a completely virtuous person will give me anything. What would I do with a rogue's gift? I don't want his material rewards, even less his money. I shall revile him until he stinks worse than a decaying crow.]³⁰

Essential to the singer's credibility is Meissner's argument that the prerogative of singers to pass moral judgement is double-edged and can either exalt or depreciate the reputation of a potential host. This function of praise and blame he combines with a reminder of the mutual needs, expressed here by *gewirden* (to dignify). These two claims enable poet-minstrels to maintain self-respect and authority within the limits of their service role and marginality. Many poems like Meissner's demonstrate a self-assurance that can only have been composed by poet-minstrels who are confident their performances can convince audiences of the value of their verses. How a song, especially a reproach, was received depends literally on the kind of face the performer put on it. A pious or self-confident stance is likely to produce a stronger effect than one presenting a humble suppliant. At some point, however, confidence can grow into self-righteousness and arrogance. In the last three lines Meissner's angry criticism, usually read as a grievance, must be taken as a serious warning to the unreceptive host. As the singer places himself in control of the host's future, he strengthens his own authority.

mendicants' attacks, p. 232.

³⁰ Meissner, *HMS*, III, p. 104: XVI, 4.

Unfortunately for performers, several such verses of disapproval indicate that mutualism as an informal mechanism was not completely reliable. If we are to understand fully the nature of the reciprocity and reconcile it with its lack of reliability, it is necessary to differentiate: each party has obligations and functions, and each needs the other, but host and guest are not equals. The discrepancy in rank between the host and performer is so great, that such relations would be cultivated only if the benefits were mutual and valued. In addition, each is dependent on the other to different degrees: the wayfarers depend on their patrons for their very survival whereas garnering fame by means of panegyrics was voluntary for a wealthy nobleman.³¹ As Meissner points out, the prominence he creates through his songs does not carry the same existential necessity for the host as it does for him. In all likelihood, it is the discrepancy in rank and status that brings the two parties together, and at the same time that discrepancy is the very factor that undermines the relationship. Mutual dependence tends to equalize but unequal rank casts doubt on the credibility of the statusless party.

For performers winning the confidence of audiences was the primary strategy, for not all listeners wanted the same type or level of artistic presentation. The *Spruchdichter* in general had a basic education, but some like Marner (fl. 1230–87) knew Latin. They capitalized on their knowledge in their religious and didactic poems and also strove for increasingly greater artistic merit. Yet not all audiences and patrons at the courts wanted educational matter and artistic quality and favoured light entertainment instead. Consequently many performers sought and found welcome reception in towns where the patricians aspired to more education in the arts, to being more like nobility.³² So naturally, many poet-singers decried those with lower aspirations and education possibly out of jealousy but certainly with the goal of educating audiences to become more discriminating.

More influential than audience tastes, however, is status. No matter how productive a role performers painted for themselves, the formula also continued to remind listeners of their pariah image (Chapters 2 and 3) and to cast doubt on the value of their services. Relegated to the margins, performers are the least likely group able to supply dignity and fame to the nobility. Yet the texts say they do. This

³¹ Volker Mertens points out that although poetic performance was an important means of displaying wealth and power, especially for the nobility, it was always an elective, never a necessity: 'Dichtungsvortrag gehörte zu den fakultativen Herrschaftszeichen, war Ausfüllung einer historisch legitimierten Möglichkeit der fürstlichen Position, war Repräsentatio.' See 'Kaiser und Spielmann. Vortragsrollen in der höfischen Lyrik', in *Höfische Literatur Hofgesellschaft höfische Lebensformen um 1200. Kolloquium am Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung der Universität Bielefeld, 3. bis 5. November 1983*, ed. by Gert Kaiser and Jan-Dirk Müller (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1986), pp. 455–69 (p. 463).

³² Walter Blank, 'Einführung und Kommentar', *Mittelhochdeutsche Spruchdichtung früher Meistersang. Der Codex Palatinus Germanicus 350 der Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg* (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1974), vol. 1, pp. 1–116 (pp. 28–29).

inherent contradiction between the singer's deficiency in status and the renown he produces raises the question of just what kind of reputation was at stake for both parties. The source of the renown and prestige so desired by the host also remains unclear. The plausibility of a successful exchange of material goods for fame hinges on understanding just what kind of fame is offered.

Rosemarie Marquardt offers the extreme position that the minstrel has absolutely no public prestige to give or to lose.³³ But if the minstrel cannot supply *êre* because he has none to give, then how is it acquired by the noble patron? Other scholars offer several opinions on the manner of gaining prestige, and the role of munificence in the transaction; and there are reasons for subscribing to all of them. The two basic perspectives are based on what have hitherto been considered the two likely sources of fame: the actions of the servants or the actions of their lord. The one approach finds the source of public prestige in the activity of the minstrels and servants, and the other locates it in the activity of the host. This corresponds to two ways of looking at the activity—as a show of reverence or a proof of virtue.

Based on Moriz Haupt's interpretation of the phrase, Bäuml suggests that prestige is acquired by means of the reverence shown by all servants.³⁴ Even in its neutral version, *guot umb êre* can also be understood to refer to anyone who receives remuneration for services rendered, which classifies minstrels as part of the servant class.³⁵ But the phrase clearly designates performers and not the servant class in general.³⁶ Consequently, one must ask what this *êre* means if it comes from the minstrels as distinct from the servants. Cannot the patron's noble peers provide the same type of reputation as the minstrels? What exactly is the *êre* that is given? Although the rank of the members of the two parties is unequal, singers place equal value on their respective roles because each gives something valuable in exchange. This is Geltar's position (fl. 1230–70). While recognizing his own service role, he sets the two interacting parties on an equal footing when he says: *Git mir ein herre sin gewant/ Diu ere ist unser beider* [If a lord gives me his clothing/ the public prestige belongs to us both].³⁷

³³ Rosemarie Marquardt, *Das höfische Fest im Spiegel der mittelhochdeutschen Dichtung (1140–1240)* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1985), p. 224; Hartung, *Spielleute*, p. 50 agrees with Marquardt. Others, like Volker Mertens, Ulrich Müller, and Helmut Tervooren recognize the role of *Spruchdichter* in producing fame, but have not examined how this reputation is created.

³⁴ Bäuml, p. 179, see also Franz, pp. 116–18.

³⁵ Brandhorst, p. 118.

³⁶ Franz makes the point that the formula cannot refer solely to furnishing reputation in encomia because it applies to all minstrels, even jugglers and bear trainers, not just to poets and, therefore, using the formula to distinguish between poets and other minstrels yields questionable results, p. 121.

³⁷ Geltar, *KLD*, I, p. 119.

According to the second view, renown derives from public display of generosity and is, presumably, generated by the lord himself.³⁸ There are two separate elements here. On the one hand, the ceremony can be understood as a symbolic act, and on the other hand, the gifts themselves can be viewed as concrete proof of the host's virtue. If the emphasis is on the act of dispensing, then the recipient can be anyone.³⁹ In this case the formula does not apply because prestige is not actually exchanged for material reward. To be sure, public display has symbolic value and can produce prestige by itself. But the prominence thus won profits also from the value of the gifts themselves. Therefore it makes sense to stress the gifts, too, as Bumke does although he refers here only to gifts presented to courtiers: 'Je wertvoller die Geschenke waren, umso deutlicher offenbarten sie Macht und Reichtum des Gastgebers und umso schöner bewies sich seine höfische Tugend der Freigebigkeit'.⁴⁰ But considering the gifts together with public display yields merely a partial answer because we still cannot distinguish the prestige contributed by courtiers from that contributed by minstrels.

The only other possibility is to focus on the single item the minstrels offer—the performance of their songs. The performers have only their performance repertoire of praise and blame songs, and didactic and pious songs. As they re-create in performance what they saw and heard at a patron's court, they make the power and wealth of the patrons visible and memorable to diverse audiences. I suggest, therefore, that public prestige and fame are created by means of public spectacle of feasts, the gifts given to minstrels together with the performance art of the minstrels themselves. In order to establish whether my interpretation of the way in which the itinerant minstrel enhances the prestige and reputation of the noble host is correct, I now examine how the mutualism is represented in romance. Just how much the patron values the potential renown, he reveals by his willingness to enter into this reciprocal contract and by his gifts. If the host values the poet-performer's work and feels that he truly enhances his power and prestige, then this attitude must emerge from the gift-bestowal process described.

The Gift-Giving Ritual

Turning now from the formula to the broader literary context, I take a fresh look at the literary representation of patron–performer interaction in order to determine the

³⁸ Marquardt, p. 225.

³⁹ Schreier-Hornung presents this view: 'Da können doch kaum die Empfänger der Gaben wichtig sein, sie sind nur Objekt, die Geber stehen im Mittelpunkt', p. 94. Her view is too one-sided because it does not allow for interaction of the two parties.

⁴⁰ Bumke, *Kultur*, p. 314. See the list of literary references describing acts of largesse by the nobility in Schreier-Hornung, p. 162.

value of the minstrel's encomiastic service. This is easily accomplished for the romances. The gifts received by the performing minstrels and the often elaborate bestowal ceremony at which they are dispensed reveal the esteem in which these itinerant minstrels were held. Yet when the bestowal is described as an elaborate ceremony choreographed expressly for the purpose of conferring gifts on minstrels of low status, the imbalance in the mutualism becomes apparent and leads to the question of the source of the fame thus produced.

Scholarly interpretations regarding the way in which public prestige is accrued are not mutually exclusive. It is necessary, therefore, to examine how they might be comprehensible together as a system guiding the poet-patron relations, and to seek multiple sources for *fama*. The sources already discussed—public display of wealth, acts of generosity to vassals or to minstrels, performance of encomia—can all be taken together as a system that depends on participants of unequal rank. Fame can also be built on the 'facts' or 'events' of the feast which, when related later by participants, enhance the host's reputation. Basing reputation on such events requires a public reporting or recreation of the events by an eyewitness as we have seen with the fish-knight in *Crône* and Schwämmel the minstrel in *Klage* (see Chapter 5). For a patron, the most efficient way to achieve this goal of a flattering report would be to engage a minstrel to produce future compositions and performances. It is my purpose here to outline in more detail the mechanism of mutualism based on gift-exchange and to identify the minstrel's place within it.

The process of gift-exchange measures the attitudes towards the services minstrels perform.⁴¹ Typical of gift-exchange is the unequal status of the parties involved. In this case the minstrel initiates the interaction when he offers to create *fama*. If the host accepts this service, he obligates himself to give generously, and if the performer accepts the presents, then he, too, obligates himself, although he is free to determine the timing and the type of reciprocation. The gifts, however, are received for the sake of both parties. In romances, they are awarded at a public gift-bestowal ceremony within the social context of a court feast.

The significance of the reward ceremony lies only partially in its public display of largesse. Its splendid ritualistic enactment sets up in public a mutual agreement or contract between host and performer. As each participant plays out his role in the ceremony, it becomes an act of co-operation and, ultimately, control.

Writers of romances take great pleasure in describing the act of gift-giving by the host. The minstrels or entertainers who perform at court feasts are frequently the recipients of the most ornate and perhaps lavish, but not the most valuable, gifts. The courtiers often receive more valuable, but less eye-catching presents. Now, if generosity towards vassals enhances the ruler's reputation, then the munificence shown entertainers in romance and chronicle must procure for the donor a great deal

⁴¹ On the mechanism and meaning of gift-exchange see the classic work by Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. by W. D. Halls (New York: Norton, 1990).

of renown indeed. This appears to be an important concern in the German romances because they frequently devote many more lines to enumerating the gifts presented to minstrels than to any other single part of the court feast.

The enhancement of reputation can be achieved by the host in a number of ways. It is typically stated in chronicles and romances that the ruler buys prestige with gifts to his vassals. It is not at all unusual to find *kaufen* (to buy) used in this context: *des wart saelec êre gekauft* (whereby unqualified renown was bought).⁴² In Ulrich von Zatzikhoven's *Lanzelet*, Arthur and Ginover hold a celebration and give out valuable gifts so that they may be esteemed all the more, *daz si deste werder möchten sin/ in allen den landen* (so they would gain that much more dignity in all the lands).⁴³ This example, if we define patronage broadly, illustrates how the lord takes care of his vassals. Heinrich von dem Türlin's *Mantel* contains another. At the beginning of his feasts, Arthur outfits his knights with weapons (*gewaefen geben*) and all types of items: *Artûs der êren stam / der hiez den rittern alsam/ gewaefen geben unde kleit, / ros bedecket unde breit* (Arthur the stem of nobility had distributed to the knights weapons, clothing, and broad horses with coverlets).⁴⁴ Guinevere does the same: *der bereite man vil beider in manger wise kleider* (they were outfitted from both [jewels and fabric] with many types of clothing, ll. 172–73). These examples imply an agreement of mutual obligation of the type discussed above.

What appears straightforward—buying fame and power through an act of largesse—is actually complex, for fame and power lie not in the symbolic act itself, but in the social bonds the act establishes. Therefore, we must examine the kinds of social obligations established and reinforced by the act of granting gifts. In cases where the lord shows vassals such as knights, magnanimity (*milte*), the literal act of giving brings him tangible benefits in terms of the active support vassals provide in return. This literal purchase of reputation and power then forms the basis for the respect with which the giver is treated and for the relationship of obligations.

In contrast, when minstrels are given gifts, there is no apparent concrete basis for the symbolic prestige and acclaim garnered by the host. Belonging to one of the dishonourable trades, the minstrel has few legal rights, low social status, and no wealth. Upon what, then, can the host or patron construct a reputation when presenting the minstrels with valuable gifts in a festive atmosphere?

Public display of wealth by nobility begets renown in two ways. When King Arthur opens his treasury in *Lanzelet*, it is with the expressed purpose of garnering

⁴² Translation by Thomas, *Crône*, ll. 22552.

⁴³ Ulrich von Zatzikhoven, *Lanzelet*, ed. by K. A. Hahn (1845; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965), ll. 5618–19.

⁴⁴ Heinrich von dem Türlin, *Der Mantel. Bruchstück eines Lanzeletromans des Heinrich von dem Türlin*, ed. by Otto Warnatsch, *Germanistische Abhandlungen*, 2 (1883; Hildesheim: Olms, 1977), ll. 188–92. The description of the entire list of gifts given to knights and ladies extends from lines 161 to 207.

praise, prominence, and loyalty from his vassals. Here, his literal act of giving costly gifts to vassals achieves his goal:

der künec Artus wolte brechen
sine treskameren umbe daz,
daz man in lobete desten baz,
und wolte teilen sin golt.
dar zuo bot er michelen solt.

[King Arthur wanted to open his treasure chests so that people would praise him all the more and wanted to dispense his gold, and in addition, he offered generous pay, ll. 5596–5600.]

Clearly intended to obligate the recipient, these gifts are evidence of the gift-exchange principle. According to Marcel Mauss's definition, the principle of gift-exchange worked to establish co-operation between individuals in societies that 'have not yet reached that of the purely individual contract, of the market where money circulates'.⁴⁵ The term *solt* (pay) indicates that Arthur's first aim was to 'buy' the services of his vassals. *Solt* is usually payment given to mercenaries and vassals, and is open to the future. These gifts are presented to vassals to ensure future co-operation from them. Thus, if the gifts are a function of the anticipated reciprocation, we can consider Arthur's gifts to vassals as advance payment for services to be rendered in the future. At first glance, such gift-exchange does not appear directly applicable to poet-minstrels because they do not serve in such a contractual capacity since they exist outside the normal social rules and constraints. Yet the prevalent attitude in the romances and *Spruchdichtung* is that gift-giving is the process by which the host establishes a contractual relationship between himself and the minstrels. (Romances often mention that minstrels are invited to feasts precisely for this reason.)

Since the act itself of displaying largesse publicly increases the host's prestige and power, Arthur also intends to impress the guests with his extravagance. This makes largesse a symbolic act, and the lord remains the source of his renown. When gifts are dispensed in this way, the vassals show their lord reverence and homage. This secondary, symbolic source of prestige appears to complement the first. However, one cannot be so extreme as to disclaim any role for minstrels in this exchange as Marquardt has done.⁴⁶ She is correct in that the host is then not solely dependent on the minstrels for his reputation because it derives from the literal distribution of wealth and its representational impact. However, her examples from *Kaiserchronik* (Tharsilla and Justinian, l. 12992) and *Eneit* (l. 341,31), like many

⁴⁵ Mauss, p. 46.

⁴⁶ Marquardt maintains that this public reputation 'auch unabhängig vom Lob der Spielleute entsteht, daß sie sich gewissermaßen aus der Tat als solcher, der zur Schau gestellten Tugend ergibt', pp. 225–26. See also Franz, p. 120.

others that could be listed, apply only to the specific situation of lord-vassal relations in which the lord makes advance payment for vassals' services as already noted in *Lanzelet*. Marquardt's examples would have us believe that gifts are given without expectation of reciprocation and, therefore, do not really explain the interest in the topic of *generous* giving to entertainers if nothing is expected from them in return.⁴⁷ And yet, although payment and service are interdependent, understanding the purpose of the remuneration depends upon our interpretation of what it is exactly that the minstrels do. These two activities must, therefore, be considered together.

If we accept the interpretation that the display itself is a symbol of power, then the minstrel, for his part, contributes little to the donor's reputation when receiving rewards in a ceremony.⁴⁸ Although this is clearly one means of acquiring prestige, it would seem that any humble recipient would do.⁴⁹ There must be, then, an additional reason for making the minstrels the centre of attention. Because payment hinges on the nature and perceived value of panegyrics, the gift-giving ceremony must hold the key to the performative implications of the minstrel's service.

In the case of rewarding vassals, the magnanimous act of the lord claims their loyal service in the future, a claim that is simply part of the feudal contract. Although minstrels do not perform the same services as do knighted vassals, the principle guiding the contract is directly applicable to them. I suggest that public gift-bestowal as described in the romances is more sophisticated than a simple exchange: this ceremony attempts to influence the minstrel's future actions. In other words, the goal of gift-giving is not restricted to the symbolic, that is to the display itself, but strives toward a controlled, ritual exchange of praise and gifts that obligates the parties involved.

The most obvious explanation for giving gifts specifically to the travelling entertainers is that they are paid for their performance at the feast. After all, they have been invited to the event and asked to perform. Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that they would be remunerated for their services at the end of the

⁴⁷ In her discussion of the Justinian and Tharsilla story Marquardt attempts to separate gifts to vassals from gifts to minstrels. Her result is that the presentation of gifts is characterized by two distinct elements: The rulers dispense gifts to display their wealth, and they bestow them on their vassals who are expected to repay in real service, pp. 226–28. Her extreme position does not hold because the public dispersal of wealth has, in both cases, the characteristics of a legal contract that requires reciprocation.

⁴⁸ Schreier-Hornung claims that the only reason to give to minstrels above others is that they are a status symbol for the donor and needed at a court feast, p. 97. Thus she too, implies that they otherwise contribute little to the host's renown.

⁴⁹ The clergy may have subscribed to this symbolic interpretation where the host is the source of prestige. If this were the case, then the clergy may have urged almsgiving instead of payment to minstrels as an alternative action that would be equally beneficial to the host. However, the attention to the gift-bestowal scene by authors of romances exposes a much more complex situation.

festivities. Taking up this line of thought, Wolfgang Mohr confines the minstrel activities and, therefore, their payment to the feast itself: 'They earn their pay and create renown simply by the fact that they make the feast of the great lords more festive with art, song, instrumental pieces, and recitation'.⁵⁰ Mohr's point that all who attend a feast accrue prestige is corroborated by Hartmann von Aue who tells us, *ez geschach nie groezer êre* (never was there greater fame gained).⁵¹

Quite naturally, the *Spruchdichter* frequently desire immediate compensation for performance. Rumelant von Sachsen (fl. 1250–1300) makes the same aesthetic argument that Mohr suggested, stating that remuneration is appropriate in return for entertainment and enjoyment. He does not mention *êre*, however, stressing instead that entertainment has value, and therefore, his gifts of song, laughter, and joy must be compensated:

Ich wil den herren singen unde sagen unde lachen,
daz sie gedenken miner kunst, ich denke ir milte.
Ich kan sie machen vro, sie vröuwen mich in manigen sachen:
solt ich erweinen guot, daz waere ein groz unbilde;
Das ist ein arme kunst, da man der herren guot erweinet.
diu vröude ist krank;
die herren, die sich mit den weiner(n) hant also vereinet,
da vlie min sank!
so erken ich manigen herren, lihte vünd' ich einen,
der mir durch singen lieber gaebe, wan durch weinen.

[I want to sing, recite and laugh for the lords, so that they hold my art in fond memory and I their generosity. I know how to make them glad; they make me happy in many ways: if I had to beg for payment, that would be a huge outrage. It's a poor art that has to plead for payment from the nobles. That joy is weak; my song flees from those lords who ally themselves with whiners. I recognize many a nobleman in this manner and wish to find one who would rather reward me for singing than for whining.]⁵²

According to Rumelant, then, the host is obligated to pay because he has witnessed a performance and has presumably been pleasurably entertained. Rumelant is asking for immediate feedback as well as remuneration. Payment for entertainment defined in this way requires that the host recognize and acknowledge the value of the performance just witnessed.⁵³ This is, in effect, a different basis or

⁵⁰ 'Schon dadurch, daß sie durch ihre Kunst, Gesang, Instrumentalspiel und Vortrag von Geschichten, das Fest der großen Herren verschönen, machen sie ihnen Ehre und verdienen damit ihren Lohn' Mohr, 'Mittelalterliche Feste', p. 46. Salmen also shares this view that the minstrel adds to the host's prestige only when performing before him, *Spielmann*, p. 140.

⁵¹ All citations are taken from Hartmann von Aue, *Erec*, ed. by Albert Leitzmann, ATB, 39 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1972), ll. 2163.

⁵² Rumelant von Sachsen, *HMS*, III, p. 59: IV, 23.

⁵³ Salmen points out that it is difficult to evaluate and put a price on the artistic production

explanation for reciprocity and rests on the aesthetic argument of the host recognizing a good artist. By implication, Rumelant makes a case that patronage with immediate feedback improves performing art significantly.

Rumelant then goes on to warn the donor that he dare not be miserly. A poet should not have to complain or whine in order to obtain his due. Rumelant expresses the obligation in an aesthetic framework warning the audience that when a poet must pester his host for payment, his song no longer provides pleasure. His conclusion is that improper payment ruins the aesthetic nature of songs and stifles artistic production in general. Urenheimer (fl. post-1300) thinks in these same terms when he complains, *der herren lob e schoener klank/ [...] do sie des sanges seiten dank* [encomia to the lords sounded much more lovely / [...] when they said a ‘thank you’ for the song].⁵⁴ Although such complaint poems have often been read as evidence of minstrel greed, the far-reaching implications of these poems are that patronage is necessary for the survival not just of the itinerant poet, but of art itself.

In contrast to the didactic poets, romance accounts of feasts do not advocate this same strategy. Although the romances frequently state that minstrels attended the feast to get rich, what they are paid for is never made explicit. Further, the timing of remuneration in romances does not correlate with performance activities, if these are stated at all. One must assume that the performers would offer several performances if the celebrations lasted two weeks to a month. At a feast, gifts are dispensed to minstrels or guests towards the end during the formal banquet.⁵⁵ The terms used to indicate payment or gifts to minstrels can mean ‘to pay’ but they also have other connotations. In *Eneit* we find *bereiden*: *he bereidde di speleman* [he [Eneas] outfitted the minstrels, ll. 345, 39]. In her edition, Gabriele Schieb defines this verb as *zurecht machen, vorbereiten* [to equip, to make ready].⁵⁶ In Hartmann von Aue’s *Erec*, the same verb is used meaning ‘to outfit or equip’ (l. 2184).⁵⁷ Both imply an

of minstrels, as opposed to products of artisans, *Spielmann*, p. 87.

⁵⁴ Urenheimer, *HMS*, III, p. 38: 2.

⁵⁵ In some romances the gifts are mentioned early in the feast description, and in others the gifts are dispensed at the conclusion of the feast. Examples: In the first feast in *Wigalois* the minstrels are paid before any performance is mentioned, as in *Wirnt von Gravenberc. Wigalois der Ritter mit dem Rade*. Johannes M. N. Kapteyn (Bonn: Klopp, 1926), ll. 1680–85. Gifts are bestowed at the end of the feast in Hartmann’s *Erec*, ll. 2142–43, and in Stricker’s *Daniel von dem blühenden Tal*, ed. by Michael Resler, ATB, 92 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1983), ll. 8420–21.

⁵⁶ Henric van Veldeken, *Eneide*, ed. by Gabriele Schieb and Theodor Frings, *Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters*, 58 (Berlin: Akademie, 1964), p. 39.

⁵⁷ Another example of *berâten*: *Die spilliut wurden dâ berâten* in the *Weltchronik* by Jans der Eikel in *Jansen Enikels Werke*, ed. by Philipp Strauch, MGH, *Deutsche Chroniken*, 3 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1900), l. 12961 and *Eneit*, l. 345,37. MHG *kaufen* occurs in Heinrich von dem Türlin’s *Crône*: *Grôz êre sie dâ kouften / Mit gâbe an varnde diet*, ll. 13861–62.

openness to the future, like *solt*. These terms indicate that the minstrel's future actions are included in the contract and reveal a totally new dimension in the dynamics and duration of the relationship.

Another consideration is that in the romances the value of the gifts far exceeds direct payment for services rendered.⁵⁸ Admittedly it is not known exactly what these services were, but if poets of romances neglected to elaborate on minstrel performances, it may indicate disinterest on their part or on the part of the audience, or it may indicate that including such information would require a digression exceeding the limits of the feast narrative. If the contract were intended to extend beyond the duration of the feast, then it is also reasonable that when gifts exceed simple payment, they are intended to cover future expenses incurred in the patron's service. If this actually was the case, then each performance at a court was an audition that could lead to commissioned works.

Additional support for this interpretation comes from the fact that nowhere in a German text is the generosity of the patron said to correspond to the artistic merit of the minstrels' performances. Hartmann von Aue in *Erec* even states that all minstrels must be rewarded equally generously, disregarding individual merit. And if the gifts do not relate to the immediately completed activities of the performers, then the bestowal of gifts may point to their future compositions. This thesis is consistent with the frequent mention that the minstrels received so much that they and their families were well off into the next generation. Yet neither the terminology nor the gradation of the gifts according to rank of the donors reflect the host's reception or evaluation of the entertainment just presented. Nor are we told if any feast entertainment was commissioned. Not even performance of occasional poetry is reported. In fact, if the performance is remarked upon at all, it is in passing, and never connected with rewards or payment.

Without a correlation between the evaluation of the performance and the value of the reward, it is difficult to explain why the gifts are so lavish. One must assume that the minstrel's service is either of great benefit, or that his anger is to be avoided. In Hartmann's *Erec*, the narrator warns that the host must be equally generous to all lest the minstrels become jealous and quarrel among themselves. Should this happen, they would then curse the feast:

den gelimph varndez volc hât
swâ man einem vil gît

⁵⁸ Heinrich's *Crône* shows the lords buying prestige combined with very generous gifts to minstrels: *Grôz êre sie dâ kouften/ Mit gâbe an varnde diet: / Swaz ir von dem hove schiet, / Die wâr n sô wol berâten, / Daz sie niht wandel hâten / Von silber noch von golde:/ Swaz sin ieman nemen wolde, Daz gap man dar ungewegen* (Widespread fame was bought with gifts to the wandering minstrels, for those who later left the court lacked neither silver nor gold; whatever one of them wanted he received without restraint), ll. 13861–71, *The Crown*, trans. by J. W. Thomas, p. 154.

und dem andern niht, des hât er nît
und vluochet der hôchzît, ll. 2169–72.

[Travelling entertainers have a proper custom that if one receives something and the other does not, he becomes embittered and curses the festivities.]

This strategy of equal remuneration may represent Hartmann's individual view of minstrel powers because he does not follow his source here nor do the *Spruchdichter* echo him.⁵⁹ Now we would assume that a curse from a lowborn transient minstrel living in the interstices of society poses no serious hazard, but this text and others imply otherwise. In chronicles written by clerics, rulers like Louis the Pious and Heinrich III are commended for refusing to reward them.⁶⁰ But were there repercussions? The English *Romance of Richard Lionheart* (c. 1240–50) tells of serious results. When Richard, travelling in disguise through the Germany Empire refused to let a minstrel perform, she reported his identity and the Germans imprisoned him.⁶¹ In Hartmann's *Erec* the audience is assured that all the minstrels

⁵⁹ As in many other instances of translations from French sources into German, *Erec et Enide* by Chrétien von Troyes has been changed substantially. Chrétien does not express this notion of the minstrel's curse or blessing. Instead of suggesting that minstrels be treated equally, he explicitly links the size of the reward to the ability or wishes of the performer: *qui vost cheval, qui volt monoie, / chascuns ot don a son voloir. si boen com il le dut avoir*. (whoever wanted a horse or money, / each had a gift according to his wishes, as good as he should have, ll. 2078–80.) Cited according to Carleton W. Carroll's edition and translation, *Erec and Enide* (New York: Garland, 1987). Variants in other manuscripts express slightly different relationships or reasons for remuneration because they have either *savoir* (knowhow) or *pooir* (ability) instead of *voloir* according to Carroll (personal communication).

⁶⁰ Franz-Reiner Erkens demonstrates that when the chronicler of Emperor Heinrich III's wedding in 1043 praised Heinrich for sending away minstrels without reward, this was done because the marriage had drawn a great deal of criticism. Hence sending minstrels away made the emperor appear more virtuous among clerics, '*Fecit nuptias regio, ut decuit, apparatu*. Hochzeitsfeste als Akte monarchischer Repräsentation in salischer Zeit', in *Feste*, ed. by Altenburg, pp. 401–21 (pp. 403–05).

⁶¹ See *Der Mittelenglische Versroman über Richard Löwenherz*, ed. by Karl Brunner (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1913), ll. 663–78. Performing the wrong song, that is professing the wrong political leanings before an audience had serious consequences. See Ulrich Müller, *Untersuchungen zur politischen Lyrik des deutschen Mittelalters*, GAG, 55/56 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1974), pp. 320–23. Criticism and abuse was also taken very seriously in England and France. Andrew Taylor has noted that Henry II ordered the singer Luc de la Barre blinded for his battle satires in 'Songs of Praise and Blame and the Repertoire of the Gestour', p. 65, and Laura Kendrick studied the claim that the Castellan of Aquitaine had Marcabru assassinated for his vicious criticism, 'Jongleur as Propagandist: The Ecclesiastical Politics of Marcabru's Poetry', in *Cultures of Power: Lordship, Status, and Process in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. by Thomas N. Bisson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995) pp. 259–86.

were rewarded so that no curse was spoken at his wedding. Since they received enough, they adjudged the affair successful (*sprechen wol*) and wished Erec and Enite complete happiness (*aller saelekeit*, l. 2204). We are then told that the good wishes came true: *ir wunsch wart volleclliche wâr* (l. 2207). This, of course, occurs only at the end of the romance, but nevertheless, we find here an important reason for being generous to minstrels: if the minstrels' blessings come true, then their curse may as well! Although the texts are rarely so precise as to name the unworthy person they castigate, the didactic poets like Kelin are not shy about expressing their disapproval in terms of a warning: *Swer mir waz lobet, unde mir das liuget, [...] des êre wil ich immer krenken* (if someone makes me a promise and then denies it, [...] I shall always diminish his reputation).⁶² To the minstrel is attributed the ability to affect one's future reputation. If this ability was thought to be magic, then dealings with minstrels were tinged with the glamour of the performance and the superstitious sense of luck. Although this conclusion may not be widely generalized, I shall explore the ways in which the minstrels may indeed have been able to influence the future.

According to Hartmann then, the reward does not necessarily represent an evaluation of the performance. Equal remuneration is nevertheless meaningful in German texts. Gifts need not compensate for past actions, but rather, they may equip the minstrel for the future. As mentioned in *Eneit*, after the rewards are presented, the happy minstrels go out and celebrate Eneas far and wide. This means that the most important part of the minstrel's activity does not begin until the feast has ended. Depending on the prominence of his patron, the minstrel may, during his travels, augment an already existing reputation but he also has the power and ability to create and establish a lasting reputation for his patron, as minstrels do for Eneas, the newly crowned outsider. We can therefore define the payment made during the gift-bestowal ceremony as an outfitting or commissioning of the minstrel for future encomia. If the minstrel performs his most significant work after leaving the patron's court, it stands to reason that the patron would want to ensure the minstrel's good will and even to control the future actions of these singers. An elaborate gift-giving ceremony during which the minstrels are graciously and generously outfitted for their circuit would serve this purpose well.

Even a quick glance at the *Spruchdichtung* shows that poet-minstrels viewed their service in these same terms: they accepted the relationship of reciprocity, their task of nurturing and disseminating renown, and the fact that the payment confirmed a contract for future work. The converse also appears to be true, namely that any minstrel who refuses a gift refuses to be obligated. This viewpoint, too, expresses the principle of gift-exchange. 'To refuse to give, to fail to invite, just as to refuse to accept, is tantamount to declaring war; it is to reject the bond of alliance and

⁶² Kelin, *HMS*, III, p. 22: II, 2.

commonality'.⁶³ An example of such refusal occurs in the *Nibelungenlied* (c. 1200) when the two minstrels, Wärbel and Schwämmel, sent by Krimhild to invite her brothers and Hagen to the Hunnish court, attempt to refuse all gifts from the royal family in Worms. They are so wealthy they need no gifts, and are forbidden to accept any presumably so they will not be obligated to anyone but Etzel and Krimhild. In the end they must accept the gifts however:

'her künic lât iuwer gâbe hie ze lande sîn.
wir mugen ir doch niht fûeren mîn herre iz uns verbôt,
daz wir iht gâbe nâmen, ouch ist es harte lûtzel nôt.'
Do wart der vogt von Rîne dâ von vil ungemuot,
daz si versprechen wolden sô riches küniges guot.
doch muosen si enphâhen sîn golt und sîn gewant.

[‘Sire, permit your gifts to remain here at home, since we cannot take them with us. My lord forbade us to accept presents and indeed we have little need of them.’ The lord of the Rhineland was deeply angered that they should decline the wealth of so powerful a king as himself, and in the end they had no recourse but to accept his gold and precious cloth.]⁶⁴

Since Krimhild’s motive for the invitation is to lure her brothers and Hagen to their deaths, the most likely explanation for the prohibition is to keep the minstrels from entering a reciprocal relationship. King Gunther’s anger demonstrates how important the ceremony, the value of the gifts, and their gracious acceptance by the recipient, in sum, the entire process is for establishing co-operative bonds. Refusal even here seems to be tantamount to declaring war, and so the minstrels finally take the gifts.

Each poet-minstrel sang with self-confidence, as if he fully expected to affect the future opinions and attitude of his audience with his words and songs, intimating that he is very powerful and must be cultivated. In a poem referring to Leopold of Austria’s wedding celebrations (1209), Walther von der Vogelweide declares that Leopold is generous to the minstrels for this very reason: *ouch hiez der fürste durch der gernden hulde / die stelle von den mârhen lâren* (the prince also had the stalls emptied of their horses in order to acquire the goodwill of the minstrels).⁶⁵ In fact, it is now possible to reinterpret the song by Der Unverzagte where he states: ‘On this

⁶³ Mauss, p. 13.

⁶⁴ *Das Nibelungenlied*, ed. by Karl Bartsch and Helmut de Boor (Wiesbaden: Brockhaus, 1967) strophes, 1489–90. Translation by Arthur T. Hatto, *The Nibelungenlied* (New York: Penguin, 1966), p. 188.

⁶⁵ Although this is a satirical poem that makes Leopold, well known for his miserliness, appear generous to a fault, Walther’s statement supports my thesis. I cite the edition by Paul Stapf, *Walther von der Vogelweide. Sprüche, Lieder, der Leich* (Darmstadt: Tempel Verlag, 1963) with Lachmann’s numbering, L. 25, 26.

very person I shall bestow praise abundantly with my song. Wherever I go in unfamiliar lands, I remember them publicly to their advantage'.⁶⁶ We can now read this as a promise to fulfil a commission for performing encomia in the future.

Yet even hearing such promises, how can the patron be certain that the minstrel's songs will meet with his approval? Since minstrels are outside the social hierarchy and have diminished legal standing, the patron has little influence over the content of their songs once they leave the court. Conversely, the minstrel also has little influence on a host who fails to compensate him. His only recourse is to publicize shabby treatment in his songs. These complaint songs reveal the poet-minstrels to be much less powerful than the romances would have us believe.

The festive circumstances permitting social bonds to be redefined and minstrels to be rewarded are well illustrated in Heinrich von Veldeke's *Eneit* (ll. 344,12–347,12).⁶⁷ Given the ritual significance of the procedure, we need to re-examine this passage. Eneas's wedding concludes with a carefully constructed ceremony in which Eneas rewards the minstrels who had been invited to the feast. Eneas begins the presentation of gifts and rewards himself as becoming the king and highest-ranking member of the community. Although the gifts are not enumerated, we are assured the recipients and their children were supported for life. After Eneas distributes his gifts, the princes and other nobles in attendance follow suit. They make their presentations in order of decreasing rank and their gifts also decrease in value according to their rank. The customary gifts are listed: gold, silver, horses, mules, furs and fabrics. Although the narrative repeatedly stresses the generosity of all concerned, the reason, we are told, is to ensure that the minstrels leave the feast happy and laud the king, each according to his own tongue.⁶⁸

This passage, and the entire account of the wedding is revealing more for what it excludes than what it includes. It includes a detailed account of the gift-bestowal ceremony, according it more attention (36 lines) than any other section of the wedding. We are also told that the patron presides over the ceremony and follows protocol carefully, making sure that each participant performs his part according to his rank and place in the court community. The remarkable situation is that the unlikely object of this ceremony is the minstrel who, in an exceptional moment, is honoured before the entire court with praise and gifts. Yet the narrator omits the

⁶⁶ Der Unverzagte, *HMS*, II, 45: III, 4.

⁶⁷ Here my concern is to define the ritualistic significance of the gift exchange. For a lengthy discussion of the position of Heinrich's *Eneit* and my outline of minstrel functions, see Chapter 5 above.

⁶⁸ The same narrative pattern describing a sequence of donors and recipients, and gradations of gifts can be found in *Karlmeinet*, ed. by Adalbert von Keller (Stuttgart: Der litterarische Verein, 1858), ll. 292,8–23; Rudolf von Ems's, *Der guote Gerhart*, ed. by John A. Asher (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1971), ll. 6390–402; and Ulrich von Etzenbach's *Wilhelm von Wenden*, ed. by Hans-Friedrich Rosenfeld, *Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters*, 49 (Berlin: Akademie, 1957), ll. 1772–89.

reason for this ritualistic incorporation of a marginal character into the court community. And although the narrative peaks at the gift-bestowal ceremony, the performance or service for which the minstrel is being compensated or rewarded is also passed over in silence. If, as I suggest, the public reward ceremony is forward looking, then it represents the host's attempt to direct the future actions of minstrels. But how then is the reciprocity made binding?

Eneas's elaborate public ceremony supplies evidence for a second line of argument based on the efficacy goal of gift-giving to minstrels. It opens up the possibility of interpreting the entire court feast, and the reward ceremony in particular, as a social ritual. The grand banquet as restorative ritual has already been described by Barbara Haupt.⁶⁹ While it nourishes the body, it restores the integrity of the court by establishing a collective memory of the new harmony. Similarly, the reward ceremony marks the conclusion of the festivities and is recognizable as a ritual because its goal is efficacious to the extent that it changes the relationship of the participants. It provides a powerful sense of belonging to the existing social order and validates the contract when completed successfully.⁷⁰

It is typical for feudal society to rely on personal obligation for execution of public functions. This can be accomplished through ritualistic ceremonies because they create a sense of community and with it a co-operative frame of mind for adhering to the rules of society and bolster the collective memory of the new community. The gift-giving ceremony affirms and establishes a social order which designates a place for minstrels in two ways. It does this literally through the actions of the participants using the same mechanism that makes personal arrangements legally binding. In addition it designates a place for minstrels symbolically because the gifts are intended to have control over the performer in the future. Consequently celebrating the minstrels and bestowing gifts on them integrates them into the social order and also places a public obligation on both giver and receiver. *Karlmeinet* (c. 1320) contains an equally elaborate gift-giving ceremony in which Karl's praiseworthy generosity compels the minstrels to be loyal to him: *Des moeste man eme wesen hoult* (For these things they had to be loyal to him, l. 292,15). This public procedure appears to be the only way in which the donor can control the future

⁶⁹ Barbara Haupt has studied the ritual aspects of actual grand court banquets and shown that they validate hierarchical power and create social cohesion by their very repeatability and consequently create a collective memory. When these structures are reproduced in literary works to be performed and read, they produce the same sense of audience cohesion because of their exemplarity, their mimetic connection to the rituals themselves. In addition, the performances are in a general way repeatable and contribute to a collective memory of the described ritual event. See *Das Fest in der Dichtung. Untersuchungen zur historischen Semantik eines literarischen Motivs in der mittelhochdeutschen Epik*, Studia Humaniora, 14 (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1989), pp. 25–31.

⁷⁰ See Schechner, Chapter 6 on 'Selective Inattention' for a description of the varieties of ritualistic performance in *Performance*, especially pp. 187–93.

actions of the minstrels. As I have pointed out, the obligations thus incurred are accepted by the poet-minstrels.

Thus the additional dimension of the remuneration ceremony performed by the patron may be construed as a social ritual in which he assigns or confirms each person's place in the community and establishes a new hierarchy in the court. As he presides over this activity, the patron integrates the minstrels into the social order and assigns them a place as well. Albeit somewhat temporary and ill defined, the minstrels' newly assigned position in society binds them to the reciprocal system of giving and receiving. At the top of the hierarchy, the host along with his nobles is obliged to provide, and the low-born are obliged to receive—to the benefit of both parties. The value of the gifts exceeds simple payment for entertainment alone, and the public nature of the rewards obligates the minstrels to secure and augment the future reputation of their host and patron.

In addition, minstrels must be propitiated because their prophecies and wishes come true. If they say someone will be renowned far and wide, they can make it true with their own songs. Thus they can cause to be true what they sing by singing it. I do not claim that the minstrels are magicians, nor that medieval audiences believed in magic. Rather, the minstrels' verses in performance strongly influenced the attitudes of a great many people. If the minstrels have such power, then the patron needs to control the content of their songs especially after they leave his presence. This can be accomplished only by incorporating the singers into the community through public ceremony and placing a personal obligation on them without appealing to argument or law. The purpose, then, of the ostentatious remuneration in *Eneit* and other German romances is to influence the future songs of minstrels. Therefore, the gifts must be understood as a contract, a commission for future encomiastic performances.

Gift-exchange accomplishes several things already recognized: 1. It concludes the minstrel's performance because this is the moment when the host and patron acts. 2. It returns the audience to the customary state of affairs where the servants serve, rulers exercise munificence, and subjects receive. This reaffirms the social hierarchy and status quo. 3. It pays the performers for their work. 4. It commits them to future poems supporting the host (*solt, bereiten*); hence it rewards performers for being good at what they do and makes them happy, so that they will laud the host far and wide in the future.

Finally, to answer the question posed at the beginning—how ostentatious giving provides honour and prestige—the answer is that it does so in several ways. If the donor performs well, his reputation increases by means of the symbolic value of the display along with the ceremony, and actual proof of wealth and generosity. In addition, prestige accrues to the host by means of the actions of those who serve because they all show their reverence. And the minstrels, because they are witnesses, will document the event and the renown garnered by singing their poems. Thus their acceptance of gifts demonstrates their acceptance of the agreement to broadcast the fame of the host in the future. In this way the ritualistic nature of the feast and the

gift-giving ceremony ensures the spread of the court's and the host's renown from court to court when the minstrels sing well of him.

My interpretation, that the favours given to minstrels are intended to obligate them to singing encomia to the host wherever they travel in the future, is also supported by the condition of itinerancy among minstrels. Itinerancy should not be viewed solely as a social and economic handicap or necessity. It also makes the minstrel particularly suited to the creation and expansion of fame and renown. To be sure many minstrels were itinerants because positions for entertainers at the courts were few, especially in the thirteenth century, but it is also likely that the purpose of spreading the fame of members of the ruling class could only be accomplished by wayfaring minstrels and not by long-standing members of one's own household. To be effective, panegyrics would have to be disseminated widely, and only a travelling minstrel could accomplish that task. Thus itinerancy was necessary in order for this function to be fulfilled.

One final point needs to be made here. I have omitted from discussion one essential element in the minstrel's activities—the performance itself. Remuneration is generally made shortly after the minstrels perform and, therefore, the performance must necessarily have an impact on the host and audience. The effect of the performance may actually influence the amount the minstrel is paid. According to the romances, an outstanding performance is likely to open the purse wider in a festive banquet situation, but a bad performance is not likely to tighten the purse strings because of the multiple meanings of the gift. But do the romances offer only a poetic fiction? Does the host have any means of establishing a contract without a public ceremony? Since *Spruchdichter* build their verses on the exchange principle, it is permissible to assume that the principle reflects actual social norms and that quotidian payments (by a bursar) bound minstrels in a similar manner. In non-feast, every day settings, more private types of performances have a different aesthetic where payment may indeed more closely reflect the artistry of the performance, or may be limited by the host's cash problems. With a small group a host may view a performance more critically, with a keener eye toward the singer's ability to hold the attention of a more intimate audience. If, in this performance, the singer shows off his compositions and pleases, then the host may decide that he can effectively purvey *fama*. In such a case, we would recognize an additional, significant component in a performance: It functions as an audition. Payment for the performance would then constitute a commission for future eulogies to the patron. In the next chapter I turn to the minstrel's side of the contract to examine its effects on composition and performance.

Our verses shall this happy day record
and a wise emperor loyally eulogize

Cao Xueqin

CHAPTER SEVEN

Creating *Fama* and Re-membling the Present

My interpretation of gift exchange and the gift-bestowal ceremony has defined the host's acts of donation and the expectation of future service from the minstrels who elicited them. The minstrels for their part, already aware of the terms of the contract, press their specialized compositions and performances of poetry into political-social service. I have thus far laid out indirect evidence for the poet-minstrels' task: they obligate themselves to compose and sing commissioned encomia on their circuit after leaving their host.¹ This discovery now raises the question of the effects of this contract on the performers. What were some of the conditions dictating the production of poetic song? And what were the poetic means employed to accomplish the task successfully? Building on answers to these questions, I will then examine how the poet-singers themselves understood their artistic mission as a result of these conditions.

For answers to these initial questions, I turn to the panegyrics themselves and to the poetic dialogue among the minstrels. I hope to demonstrate that the task of fulfilling the host's desire to elevate his reputation is a complex, three part endeavour: the minstrel must collect first-hand information about the patron, disseminate it, and finally, perform well enough to influence audiences in the desired manner.

According to the discussion in the song corpus, the minstrels as a group, including itinerants and those who obtained temporary residence at court, did indeed possess

¹ Jens Haustein is the first to have even suggested that encomia are not necessarily sung before the host and patron. If sung elsewhere, he thinks the current host may pay for the encomium composed extolling another but does not follow this up in his study of Marner's verse, *Marner Studien* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1995), pp. 207–08.

the means to fulfil the socio-political function when called upon to produce *fama* for patrons. They collected material for their verses while in attendance at a court. Ever composing new songs to disseminate someone's fame as they travelled, they would sing of their experiences at the previous court and praise or censure the previous hosts whenever they arrived at a new location. As account books indicate, individual minstrels may have had intimate access to members of the household and may even have acquired private and privileged information. As suggested in Chapter 4, minstrels who often worked as watchman in a castle were likely to hear a great deal. (The discreet ones kept gossip and secrets to themselves, or used them to their own advantage.) The special position of being able to choose whom to praise automatically turned them into moral critics, and their typically self-assured stance reveals that they were fully aware of this role. The better to accomplish their task, they placed into their verses additional messages and layers of meaning by which they created a communication network for themselves. Because they transmitted information about wealthy personages in this manner, the singers found travelling and the itinerant life essential although they made use of other modes of dissemination as well.

The third part of the process is the most critical because it is necessary for a singer to strike the right chords in his audience for his message to be embraced and remembered. Success depended on the quality of the song as well as on the artistic level of the performance. Both reinforced the credibility of the minstrel without which he could have no impact. I am most concerned with this, the performance stage, for it leads to their aesthetics.

Building Reputations and Networks

The *Spruchdichter* Kelin (fl. 1250–87) resolves the question of whether the singer understood the implications of the reciprocity agreement as described in the previous chapter. He composed and sang during and after the difficult years of the Interregnum. His songs, like those of other wayfarers, indicate that his travels gave him the opportunity to disseminate commissioned panegyrics, to seek out ever new audiences, and to choose whom to praise.

He relates the process by which he fulfils his obligations to his generous host, Volkmar von Kemenaten.² In so doing, he demonstrates to us that he must interact with many different people in order to be successful. After performing for Volkmar and accepting his gifts, Kelin leaves that court and sings three encomia praising his

² Between 1231–82 there were at least four people by the name of Volkmar von Kemenaten. The Volkmar of the song lived in the castle in (Groß) Kemnat by Kaufbeuren according to Wolfgang von Wangenheim's notes, *Das Basler Fragment einer mitteldeutsch-niederdeutschen Liederhandschrift und sein spruchdichter-Repertoire (Kelin, Fegfeuer)*, (Bern: Lang, 1972), pp. 41–43.

donor in two different places. His commission did not necessarily limit or name the kind of song expected, but he declares that he sang three praise songs.³ The number three refers to the frequency of singing in praise of Volkmar. There were apparently three performances of at least two, possibly three different songs because they were sung in two different locations. These specific bits of information, prefaced with his comment that Volkmar outfitted him well with gifts (*mit gâbe wol beriet*), make clear that gifts given to minstrels were not always considered remuneration for current entertainment but rather intended as an advance or commission for future laudatory songs. Hence Kelin's specific reference to the number of songs performed indicates that he has indeed accomplished some portion of the contract:

Wil ieman hin gein Swâben,
 der sol den edeln sagen,
 daz ich mit kranken gâben
 mich vil lützel kan betragen.
 man sol in sagen, man sæhe mich selten rîten.

Volcmære von Kemenâten,
 dem sage er mîne leit,
 der manigen hât berâten
 in hôchgelobter wirdicheit,
 die ie erstreit vil lobes bî sînen zîten.

Sît daz ich von dem edeln schiet,
 der mich und manigen gernden dâ mit gâbe wol beriet,
 sît sanc ich ime in zwêen landen drî lobeliet,
 zu Weinsberc eins, die zwei dort ûf dem Sande.

Die ich mit willen bringe vûre,
 des ist Volcmâr von Kemenâten ein ûf getâne tûre.
 sît ich ir keines milte vûr die sîne spûre,
 sô hât er lob und rîcheit âne schande. (III, 8)⁴

[Should anyone be going to Swabia, let him tell the worthy people that I cannot get by on shabby gifts. One should tell them I'm seldom seen on horseback. He should relate my woe to Volkmar who has outfitted many by reason of his highly praiseworthy nobility, which always achieved much praise for him in his time. Since I took leave of that noble man, who supported me and many a minstrel with gifts, I have sung to him three songs of praise in two lands, one in Weinsberg and two there on the Strand. To those whom I choose to bring forward Volkmar is an open door. Since I do not

³ The encomia Kelin mentions in this song have not come down to us in any of the manuscripts, and so we cannot know how significant such songs were to his income.

⁴ This song is cited according to von Wangenheim, p. 132. The translation is mine. The two editions, *HMS* and von Wangenheim, differ on Kelin III, 8, line 15. *HMS*, III, p. 24 reads: *diu ich mit willen bringe vûr*.

perceive the generosity of others outdoing his, he rightfully deserves praise and wealth without blame.]

My discussion begins, like the song, with the topos most consistently associated with minstrels: the singer's complaint of inadequate compensation and an accompanying plea, implicit or explicit, for more generous remuneration from the audience at hand. This commonplace expressed by all minstrels has, because of its frequency, exposed many poets to criticism for unashamed begging and greed. Unlike the fourteenth century scribes who penned the *Minnesinger* manuscripts, modern scholars concurring with such disapproval would not have included these songs in the now much prized collection. Yet if we accept the terms of the contract that require Kelin to perform commissioned encomia before many audiences, then the request for payment needs to be explained within this context.

The song's surface meaning is straightforward. Since leaving Swabia, Kelin has not received adequate compensation. As a result, he is clearly disappointed and wants someone to communicate his plight to the Swabians (str. 1). In a *laudatio temporis acti*, he praises what Volkmar von Kemenaten has done in the past (str. 2). Valued already by Volkmar, he now proves himself by fulfilling his obligation to his benefactor (str. 3). The outdoing topos in the final strophe reassures us that Volkmar is still unsurpassed in his generosity.⁵ Kelin argues by implication that his poetry is good—good enough for Volkmar to have commissioned him to sing and laud him on his travels, but now in Bavaria, or wherever he is outside of Swabia,⁶ he encounters rejection. From his perspective, he has acquitted himself well as a singer, and suggests, therefore, that it befits his current host to offer him adequate remuneration and a commission.

Right from the beginning, the surface meaning is intended for a divided audience as we can tell from the general address, *wil iemen* in the first line. By enlisting a messenger to take information to the Swabians, Kelin signals that he has three distinct messages that divide his intended audience into virtually three distinct subgroups: the immediate listeners, the potential emissary, and the Swabians who will receive the information. Kelin specifically addresses the potential courier, expressing a message intended for Swabians and Volkmar but he also offers specific messages to each. The song carries multiple subtexts as each group of addressees has its own interests and will find different points to focus on.

⁵ Kelin was able to make comparisons because he was well travelled in the High German areas. He praises the Swabians and upper Rhinelanders in song II, 3: *mir sint die besten kunt in Swāben und an den Rīne!* (I know the best [people] in Swabia and on the Rhine), von Wangenheim, p. 41.

⁶ In str. 3 Kelin mentions where he sang but we cannot be sure of the location of *ûf dem Sande*. It could refer to the bank of the Pegnitz in Nürnberg as in Marner's line: *Nüerenberg hat liut und der Sant*, or the Danube as Kelin mentions in another song *ze Wiene an dem Sant*, von Wangenheim, p. 133.

Kelin employs the complaint—with its tacit plea for support—to address each audience separately according to its own perspective and interest from which it hears the song. For example, the lack of support Kelin expresses is certainly an appeal to the immediate listeners to be as generous as the Swabians. While this statement implies praise of Swabian generosity, a compliment that includes some and excludes others, it is certainly more welcome to the Swabians than to the non-Swabians. Kelin also uses the grievance as a point of departure to honour Volkmar with yet another song, thus adding a fourth performance (and perhaps even a fourth composition) to his catalogue of songs to Volkmar. This clever coupling of his charge of inadequate remuneration with a panegyric creates yet a third level of meaning: the song itself becomes the message.

One may conclude that Kelin's combined complaint and praise implies two ways of affecting the audience on the one hand and helping his own cause on the other. First, it reminds the listeners of the reason for remuneration. Secondly, he illustrates with his song how well he can weave new encomia into a performance. This strategy sets up his listeners to draw the conclusion that he can work effectively for them, too. This shows that he is less concerned with an explicit complaint of insufficient remuneration than with an implicit advertisement for himself. His composition, then, and his performance are intended to be understood as an audition. Kelin is thus able to present an example of his encomiastic ability to the audience before him and at the same time assert that his artistic excellence was already valued in Swabia.

By the same token, the introductory missive to the Swabian nobles, Kelin's absent audience, is not merely a pretext for inducing the members of his immediate audience to open up their moneybags and commission eulogies. Rather, the enumeration of the songs reveals his aim in sending a messenger—to enable that person to report to the nobles that he has indeed sung skilfully the praises of Volkmar in fulfilment of his contract.

Beyond the layer of meaning aimed at the audience as a whole lies the hidden meaning intended for the travelling emissary. Kelin appeals to his listeners to convey his message, but who might take such a missive to Swabia, and who communicate it most effectively? Obviously, one who hears him perform. This person may be a Swabian visitor, or any member of the audience, but the most likely messenger would be a fellow wayfarer. This assumption makes most sense if both content and form, that is, the song itself, is to be transmitted. A minstrel could easily learn and perform the song and would not need to resort to a paraphrase. After all, the song is far broader and more engaging than the complaint of penury it voices.

The final lines are even more revealing if they are intended for the ears of a minstrel. Kelin states that whoever he should choose to bring or present at Volkmar's court will be welcomed by his host.⁷ But the statement also implies that if

⁷ Von Wangenheim's translation for this line: *Wen ich von mir aus mitbringe, der ist Volkmar willkommen*, p. 133.

a minstrel arrives with Kelin's song, used perhaps in lieu of a 'letter of introduction', then Volkmar will admit him. This interpretation is quite plausible because it would be false to assume that composer and singer are always the same person. Furthermore, since it has already been mentioned that Volkmar opens his door to Kelin's colleagues (*mich und manigen gernden*), it appears that he offers his court as a centre for literary and artistic exchange. To gain admission to such a court would be a distinct advantage to Kelin's courier. The equation suggested by Kelin is that a well-run court is one that supports travelling performers. Kelin again enhances his own credibility with his definition for he must be telling the truth if he refers his comrades in song to that particular court.

Addressing three audiences, Kelin accomplished several goals in one song: he praised Volkmar's court, submitted his credentials claiming he has already won the support of one noble patron, auditioned for commissions, and notified his patron that he is indeed singing the commissioned songs.

The fact that this song subsumes multiple messages enables the system to feed itself. The very use of the medium of the praise song to inform the donor that the contract has been satisfied is clever enough, but the minstrel is even more efficient. He uses the same song as an audition to acquire an additional commission either from the praised patron or from a new one. As Kelin demonstrates, the minstrel can weave into his song an illustration of his talent for panegyrics.

What Kelin tells us he accomplished may appear simple and straightforward. Nevertheless, we should not underestimate its potential for reaffirming and shaping prevailing attitudes and for creating new ones among his listeners. For example, his praise of the generous Swabians in Franconia or Bavaria works to his best advantage when such adumbration on lack of generosity and taste is directed against the listeners' sense of identity. It attributed to them provincialism, or breach of custom, a disgrace no nobleman was likely to admit to. The donor has good reason to commission eulogies because in this system of oral dissemination the minstrels' songs could have far-reaching implications for the shaping of attitudes towards individual nobles, their courts, and their actions.

Theoretically then, a performance is also an audition. A good performer would, therefore, use this opportunity to display his talents and consider the performance successful if it culminated in a commission. An audition points to the priority of performance and the dependence of a literary work on it such that the meaning of the song is not determined by the text, but created by the performance.

To carry this line of thought one step further, I suggest that the meaning of the song emerges fully only in the performance context where it unfolds in auditory sequence that helps form a bond between audience and singer. The temporal nature of listening sets up expectations for the listeners. For this reason many songs have the structure of a riddle reserving the answer or unexpected resolution for the last line. In addition, the audience-singer interaction encompasses more than reception by individuals. During performance, a bond is formed between the spectators and

performer that has been referred to as the urge to share an experience.⁸ Often the singer or performer hides behind the role he plays, but Kelin accentuates and thematizes the dichotomy between the performer and the role. Listening to this song, the audience should not suspend disbelief. Rather listeners must remain aware that what Kelin demonstrates by singing his composition is exactly what he says he is doing, namely singing encomia. This announcement enables the audience to discern the two Kelins: the individual wayfaring singer (the 'true' Kelin) who appears to speak for himself and the singer-role, namely the first-person voice. When the voice says 'Who will carry a message for me?' it appears to be a sincere request which requires a response. The audience cannot be sure of the sincerity of that request until the next two stanzas. In the second stanza, where the laud of Volkmar begins, the complaint of insufficient remuneration in stanza one suddenly falls into the background as a pretext for a panegyric. It is indeed a frequent and familiar enough motif used by the gnomic poets as a backdrop for the praise of a generous host that it almost serves as identification. Thus once the tribute is recognized, the pose of the singer becomes clear and the listener must now re-evaluate the sincerity of the first request. The costume worn by the minstrel can become an additional layer of commentary on the substance of his words: rags would corroborate the complaint, and rich attire would create irony.

If the first stanza appears to reveal Kelin's true complaint and the second discloses it as a pose that, at the same time identifies Kelin as the wayfaring singer he is, a double perspective is created that is carried further by the third stanza. Here it becomes clear that the complaint cannot be dismissed as a mere pose. The listener is forced to view at once both possibilities, the pose and the genuine assertion, when Kelin states he has sung panegyrics to Volkmar. The listener may recognize Kelin's role-playing but at the same time, his claim is proven genuine by the fact that he is doing it before his audience. Because the listeners experience the encomium, they can now attest to the veracity of its content. And by association, the truth claimed for the content is not merely that Kelin sang the songs, but also that his praise of Volkmar is accurate! Thus we have here the double perspective of knowing that Kelin is playing a role as well as himself and it is this perspective that brings into focus the veracity of the words. The audience witness precisely what the singer claims to have done because the claim and the deed have been linked by means of the double perspective. After reflecting upon this link the audience can indeed attest to the truth of Kelin's claims.

In contemporary performance, we are accustomed to the modern avant-garde that begins with reality and aims to expose the illusion and duplicity created in performance. In contrast, medieval performances, lacking the usual formal physical frames of curtains, stage, lighting, etc., acknowledge from the very outset the illusion

⁸ J. L. Styan, 'The Mystery of the Play Experience: Quince's Questions', in *Performing Texts*, ed. by Michael Issacharoff and Robin F. Jones (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), pp. 9–26 (p. 13).

they create. Like ritual, medieval performance aims to transform the role it creates into a new reality. Medieval audiences knew that the singer is not identical with the first-person voice. In fact, the success of the song depends on this double perspective being recognized and maintained by the listeners throughout the performance. It allows the audience to question the credibility of the song while recognizing that the voice of genuine experience and the pose could well merge into one and what the minstrel sings could well be true. Gradually, the congruence of word and deed turns the role-playing into reality to the extent that the audience experiences this unity, and once experienced, it gains a life of its own. This is a conjuring trick to be sure, but one that can occur in any society immersed in ritualistic thought. As Tyrone Guthrie has written: 'I believe that the theatre makes its effect not by means of illusion, but by ritual'.⁹

Therefore, by making the audience aware of his actions while he executes them, Kelin creates, like Veldeke, self-conscious poetry. His song draws attention to itself, its artistry and craft. Kelin is consciously using this double perspective, pointing out the simultaneity of the true Kelin and the role. As a result, the boundary between the 'apparent' experiential reality and the performative pose is made more conspicuous.

The performer must always cross that boundary when he performs a role, but here Kelin thematizes it, separating the role from the person. This forces the audience to become aware of the separation of performer and role. As he impersonates himself, he forces his listeners to reflect upon the 'as if' world that runs parallel to but also spills into the 'real' world. The role he plays is the 'true' Kelin even though the two are not really identical. What the audience experiences as reality is a performance that verifies the content of the song, enabling the audience to experience an event that is true or real. However, since this event is identical to the narrative content, the performance opens a door between fiction and reality. The result is that the song becomes a way to make true what the voice claims is true.¹⁰

My interpretation indicates that the song is intensely concerned with the nature of art. The double perspective highlights, like Brecht's epic theatre, the boundary between nature and artifice, reality and art. By forcing his public to be aware of the double perspective, he makes them cognizant of his mastery of the art forms that enable the song to spill into their experienced reality. Hence the song features the poet-performer's art. The intricate multi-layered construction of the text can be admired for itself, but forcing a double perspective during the performance

⁹ Tyrone Guthrie (p. 350) is cited according to J. L. Styan, 'The Mystery of the Play Experience: Quince's Questions', in *Performing Texts*, ed. by Issacharoff, pp. 9–26 (p. 14). See also Anne Richter who confirms Guthrie's views, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1962).

¹⁰ My point here, that the medium verifies the message, is characteristic of gnomic songs. Jan-Dirk Müller makes this very point in delineating Reinmar's performative stance, 'Performativer Selbstwiderspruch. Zu einer Redefigur bei Reinmar', *Beiträge*, 121 (1999), 379–405 (pp. 389–91).

demonstrates to his audience that it is the very art and invention of the singer that creates and conveys truth, if truth be based on experience. The process of performance using the first-person account of events goes beyond hearsay (no subjunctives occur) because it provides the experience of what it claims to be true. Art of this type relies on the performer's ability to turn words into reality by crossing the boundary in performance. Kelin's tactic or goal, then, is the valorization of poetic song: in addition to enjoyment, poetry provides new knowledge and experience. Ultimately, it is an excellent inducement for a commission to imply that good poetry serves patron and audience alike because it provides access to truth.

And if I take my experiment one step further still and imagine a minstrel taking Kelin's message in the form of the song itself to Volkmar's court, then it acquires yet another self-referential layer as the second singer plays the role of the first. Removed from its original geographic location and performance context, the performance now takes place in Swabia where the audience has different loyalties. Since credibility must be re-established at every performance, the song still challenges and involves the audience the way the first performance did—it aims again to link word and deed. This time, however, the second performer sings a message that came from elsewhere while the first-person voice remains the same. In addition, the praise is sung in the presence of Volkmar, but by another performer, one lauding him voluntarily. Once the audience discovers that the song's message comes from outside Swabia, they must accept the truth of the content because the performer and singer have executed what the previous singer requested and foretold: the second singer, now Kelin's emissary, has come to Volkmar's court and has been welcomed.

The song has potential for ever more variations in its mode of delivery without even varying the text in any way. And of course, it is also easy to adapt the text to a slightly different social situation. If a song can be passed on from performer to performer, it is reasonable to conclude that a minstrel can create truth by singing words of praise because the words in the form of song can take on an independent existence. Thus Kelin's composition, relying on words, melody, gesture, and multiple performers demonstrates that true learning can be generated in the form of audience experience during performance.

Quite similar to Kelin's song is a shorter one by Rumelant von Schwaben (c. 1250–1300) in which he achieves almost as much as Kelin does. The primary message is that fame does not die. Since a minstrel speaks these words, he sets himself up as guarantor that it will also come true:

Swelich richer ist an eren wunt,
 der denke an den von Rifenberc
 Unde an den edelen helt von Kemenaten:
 Und ist er siech, er wirt gesunt;
 er werk' auch lobelichiu werk,
 an richen tugenden sol er sich niht verspaten.
 Sie habent ez verdienet wol,

daz man ir nach tode sol hie mit den besten denken;
 Uolrich was ganzen tugende vol,
 Im kunde niht unt wenken
 Volcmer, swa man um ere solde werben.
 Ir lib ist tot, ir lob kan niht irsterben.

[Any wealthy man who is wounded in his reputation should remember the lord of Reifenberg and the noble hero Kemenaten; then if he is sick he will recover. Also he should perform praiseworthy deeds and not be late with a store of virtues. They (the nobles praised) have thoroughly earned [remembrance] that after their death people remember them in the company of the most outstanding. Ulrich was the perfection of virtue. Volkmar could not avoid him wherever a person strives for fame. Their bodies are dead, their praise can never die.]¹¹

Already in the first line Rumelant sets himself up as an expert on reputation building by dispensing advice. At the literal level he introduces his qualifications, that he has sung for two lords: Ulrich von Reifenberg and Volkmar von Kemenaten. Now that they are both dead he is still remembering them to others and presenting them as models to be emulated. He addresses those who (he implies) have asked about increasing their own renown. This ploy turns an encomium into a counselling session, and in it he warns the audience not to delay building a reputation. The second level is concerned with the role of the singer. He not only gives evidence for his own professional artistic competence but, like Kelin, demonstrates that he remains loyal to patrons even after they die and cannot reward him any longer. The final line, the climax of the song reminds the listeners of the dead nobles who live eternally through their fame. And because Rumelant sings before an audience, he proves that he, like other singers, can make the promise of undying fame come true. His claim of authority implies that the poet-minstrel selects and proclaims the virtuous lords and praiseworthy deeds. Hence without the poet-minstrel, fame does not exist and no one remembers the hero or the virtuous man.

We must also consider that the success of an endeavour such as Kelin's and Rumelant's depends upon talented performers. In general, it must have been difficult for the poet-minstrel to provide proof that the desired songs have been disseminated and have actually taken effect. The surest sign of renown is finding that one's name is on everyone's lips, and that means minstrels had to rely on the audience to talk about songs they had heard so that eventually a report would reach the patron. Oral transmission operates best if the performer is popular and travels rapidly, thus creating for himself the opportunity to sing to a great number of audiences. The more frequently he sings, the greater the number of people who hear him, and the greater the chance that those lauds cycle back to the patron. A more efficient way to disseminate panegyrics and information was for itinerants to share songs. It is a theme, though infrequent, that songs are adopted by fellow minstrels and transmitted

¹¹ Rumelant von Schwaben, *HMS* III, p. 69: 3.

to a large number of people, even making their way to the patron himself. Kelin inserts into his song the request that it should be taken to his patron.

Numerous songs reveal that poet-minstrels actually fulfilled their obligations in the way Kelin implies. The number of encomia in the entire corpus of *Spruchdichtung* is not large suggesting that lauding a patron was not their primary genre.¹² Indeed, the limited number of this sub-genre, when measured against all the extant verses, underscores the diverse interests of the audiences the singers served and the multifarious functions they performed. In all their songs they speak with authority and involvement in the affairs of the hosts, never as disinterested observers. A number of songs lauding named individuals are extant but in many more the patrons remain unnamed. Clearly, songs praising an unnamed donor have rather less impact on a reputation, but may have survived better in the manuscripts because they are more easily adaptable. The dissemination of such praise songs depended on the ease with which they could be repeated and also reused for other patrons. Presumably names could be inserted easily to suit different patrons and specific situations. Many songs in the corpus appear to be raw material for performance and ready to be adapted to fit a particular audience and region. In our modern world, too, audiences like performers to make references to their local culture. Thus the flexibility within performance practice and the mutability of texts even if 'fixed' in manuscript form made it relatively easy for minstrels to use each other's material. The didactic poet-minstrels offer evidence that they created a network to do just this.

One difficulty in this project of prestige building is that songs can only promote someone's reputation and protect it from disgrace if they are distributed widely. Panegyrics need to become the subject of public discourse. Kurt Franz is sceptical that *Spruchdichter* could have had any such influence because the few encomiastic songs extant would not furnish enough publicity for a patron.¹³ The small number of this sub-genre in the corpus is not a compelling reason to doubt their impact, however. Praise and reputation can be bolstered by means of multiple voices and performances as Heinrich von Veldeke's narrator and Heinrich von dem Türlin's

¹² Among the 23 extant Kelin songs we have only this single encomium and 3 political verses. Der Unverzagte has left us of 22 verses, 1 encomium to Rudolph of Habsburg (*HMS*, III, p. 45: III, 1) which may be satirical. Of Goldener's 5 verses 2 are encomia with specific people named (*HMS*, III, p. 51: 4 and 5), of Hermann Damen's 39 songs, 11 are panegyrics, and from Frauenlob 7 praise songs of over 120 verses have come down to us. Even a fragmentary listing of *Spruchdichter* such as this reveals that encomia were an integral part of an itinerant's repertoire although not their primary offering. See Johannes Rettelbach's list of encomia for the north German patrons named by seven poet-minstrels, 'Abgefeimte Kunst: Frauenlobs "Selbstströmung"', in *Lied im deutschen Mittelalter. Überlieferung, Typen, Gebrauch: Chiem-see-Colloquium 1991*, ed. by Cyril Edwards, Ernst Hellgardt, Norbert Ott (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996), pp. 177–93 (p. 192).

¹³ Franz, p. 121.

fish-knight demonstrate. As it turns out, the minstrels found their own solution to this problem: they shared material and inserted each other's songs into their own repertoire. Presumably the songs could be passed on to others during each performance as well as in jam sessions. In this way, the number of performances of any given song could increase rapidly. As performances multiplied so did the prestige of the person lauded.

A short digression is necessary here. My suggestion that the didactic poet-minstrels actually co-operated is quite new. The corpus of collected poems contains so many insult poems, some of them quite vituperative, often directed against fellow singers that most scholars consider the competition between singers to have been fierce. To-date no one has taken seriously the possibility that these performers may also have co-operated and collaborated on occasion. Helmut Tervooren and Ulrich Müller suggest that, in addition to rivalry among themselves, these insult poems served to distinguish one group from others of lesser quality or lower status.¹⁴ If this is correct, then the commonalities that define the group would have given the members the basis for co-operation. Singers were quite capable of establishing informal subgroups of like-minded performers as Zilies von Sayn indicates. His songs express the singer's self-respect and a sense of group pride governed by the rules of the genre: 'Whoever intends to praise and blame must also follow suit; if he does not, he produces amateurish songs'.¹⁵

A good example of co-operation among minstrels occurs in a song by Hermann Damen (fl. 1260–1310) who was active primarily in northern Germany near Rostock. We don't know if he was a member of the lesser nobility or a burgher, or even a liveried domestic.¹⁶ Hermann's encomium gives us insight into his concept of performance and of the creative interaction possible among performers:

Ein lop (daz) sol mir erklingen,
ich wil'z an die gernden bringen,
uf daz sie'z den besten singen,
schone in den landen,

¹⁴ 'Aus den Texten erfahren wir, dass die Verfasser der sozial nicht besonders geachteten Gruppe der fahrenden Berufskünstler angehörten, dort aber eine Sonderstellung beanspruchten', Müller, 'Sangspruchdichtung', p. 188. Similarly, Tervooren, pp. 36–37. Unfortunately, I cannot corroborate Tervooren's view because I have found no clear distinction between singers, reciters and other performers using the medium of words with or without music in any non-literary sources. We must postulate such a range of media and variety of offerings for domestics and itinerants alike that any groupings these performers recognized will remain indeterminate for us. Nevertheless, I see no reason why, if minstrels could benefit from co-operation, they would not have done so.

¹⁵ *HMS*, III, p. 25: II, 2; see Chapter 6 above.

¹⁶ *VL*, vol. 2, col. 36–39, but see Eva Kiepe-Willms's study on Herman Damen's life and songs, 'Sûs lêret Herman Dâmen. Untersuchungen zu einem Sangspruchdichter des späten 13. Jahrhunderts', *ZfdA*, 107 (1978), 33–49.

In die hoehe, von der site,	5
uz der enge, in die wite;	
swer mir diz lop wil ze strite	
tuon, der wirt bestanden.	
Swa ich wider lob ie streit,	
mit disem lobe ich sige vaht:	10
her herzoge, sit gemeit,	
diz lop han ich an iuch gebraht.	
von Slesewik, vor schanden	
kunt ir iuch beschirmen schone:	
diz lob iuwer tugent ze lone	15
sing' ich in disem niuwen done:	
zuht habet ir in banden	

[I shall strike up an accolade; I want to pass it on to the minstrels so that they can sing it before the best people, reliably throughout the lands, to the heights from the sidelines, from the narrows to open spaces: whoever wants to dispute this praise song with me will be conquered. Everywhere I have ever fought on behalf of praise, I have won victory with this song: my lord duke, be happy, this praise I have brought for you. Lord of Schleswig, you know well how to protect yourself completely from disgrace: this praise is reward for your virtues. I sing it in this new melody: you have courtly conduct entirely in your control.]¹⁷

Hermann reveals several important aspects of his own artistic activities. He is singing an encomium to Waldemar IV of Schleswig but he does not conceive of it as a poem or words but rather as sound or song. When he uses *lob* (praise) he may imply a praise song (*lobeliet*), certainly an obvious association. In addition, I suggest his use of *lob*, like others before him, encompasses the entire performative event. Here I translate *lob* as 'song' and 'accolade' even though the laudatory words are all we have extant. When Hermann intones an accolade, he is doing much more than uttering words of praise. He mentions *lob* (praise), *ton* (metrical-musical form) and *singen* (to sing) as a triad of components that becomes a unity only in the performance. This triad thus refers to content (praise), form (metrical-musical) and mode of delivery (singing). In other words an encomium as he describes here is nothing less than a public theatrical event and not a poem in the modern sense. Its existence as performance is its defining characteristic and the foundation of the poet-singer's enterprise.

Hence the concept 'praise' subsumes a triad of components that constitutes a performance. If the performance travels far and wide, it will defeat detractors. In keeping with the metaphor of warfare, the eulogy or performance becomes a weapon with which to fight disgrace and defend virtue. Words alone are insufficient since they are not even mentioned. Still, a singer can conquer ignominy with his triad of weapons. Sharing his song with several poet-minstrels even furnishes Hermann with

¹⁷ Herman Damen, *HMS*, III, p. 168: v, 8.

a number of comrades-in-arms and solves the problem of repetition and dissemination. If we play out the war metaphor, then the singers who carry his laud may be considered his very own army. As the encomium is relayed and propagated by means of a performative event, it vanquishes detractors.

For Hermann Damen and for singers in general, the words are clearly inseparable from melody and mode of delivery. What is separable and infinitely interchangeable, however, is the performer, whereas the triad itself is transferred intact. Hermann wants others to perform his laud song, to sing it from the rafters. More specifically, he expects them to reproduce his performance, although he may recognize that it will be a re-creation. Just how much variation and adaptation Hermann might have found acceptable is unknown. We might compare this situation with the practice of oral singers of tales who do not perceive as significant the variations from one performance to the next. They believe they are repeating the same song each time they perform whereas, in practice, they inevitably create a new song because each performance is different. For Hermann, it is not a problem if several different singers perform 'his song'. He realizes, of course, that he has a message to convey, as does Kelin, and yet he shows no concern that adaptations and stylistic re-workings by others might transform the essence of the *lob* because he is relying on performance as a whole and not the words by themselves. Likewise, Hermann is sure the accolade gains in strength by means of repeated performances or, more accurately, interpretive repetitions.

Unlike the praise songs by Kelin and Rumelant von Schwaben thus far examined, here the first person voice addresses the host directly, and, in addition, promises wide distribution of the duke's eulogy, just as the fish-knight does in the *Crône* (Chapter 5). This direct address demonstrates that an encomium could easily be sung before the celebrated person at some time. Here Hermann starts the song off on its journey. This does not undercut the earlier claim that most encomia were not sung in front of the patron. The reason is that singing only before the lord permits very little repetition and does not exploit the song fully. Hence, the most important insight for us lies in Hermann's declaration that this song is intended for wide distribution by minstrels. Only in this manner will it have the desired impact.

Minstrels performed in order to be seen and heard by an audience usually composed of court members, household servants and others, such as liveried and itinerant minstrels. In cities they also performed for wealthy citizens, their families, servants, and friends. The singers expected the audience to enjoy, discuss, evaluate, and then pay for the performance. According to the song, they also expected the performers among the audience to copy what they saw and heard. It is understood that any good performer present could evaluate, copy, and add a song, or the entire performance to his own repertoire in the manner Hermann describes. He substantiates here a well-known but important fact, that performance practice

depended then as now on an oral, not a written tradition.¹⁸ As a result, it is necessary for minstrels to co-operate and share what they know.

Once performed, a song inevitably entered the public domain. This made plagiarism essentially inconceivable. Quite the contrary, it was very desirable for one singer to learn the compositions of another according to Hermann's song. After all, before copyright existed, borrowing and imitation were a form of flattery. The essential purpose of copying is to enable the minstrel to enlarge his repertoire and to distribute encomia far and wide as Hermann says.

In contrast to my thesis that minstrels frequently shared material and copied from each other, Wolfgang Hartung falsely assumes that poet-singers had the idea of ownership of their material and guarded it jealously.¹⁹ But the fact is, minstrels wanting to spread their encomia had every reason to share these songs. A text without melody composes only 10% and with melody perhaps 20% of a performance.²⁰ Thus a text and its melody, whether composed, bought or copied, still required the performer to think through and mould the material into his own style of performing. There are four additional reasons to doubt Hartung's thesis. Minstrels had a varied repertoire and performed their own works as well as traditional material like heroic epics that were part of a common fund. Being monophonic, these songs were also easily learned. Any good performer cultivated the talent of copying from another just by hearing something sung, and this fact made it impossible to guard individual performance material. Third, minstrels participated in jam sessions in which they exchanged material just as performers of traditional and folk music still do. And fourth, parchment was expensive and easily damaged so that few minstrels could have owned more than one short roll in their lives.²¹ Thomas Bein agrees with

¹⁸ Richard Schechner expresses what literary scholars have forgotten: 'Performance knowledge belongs to oral traditions [...] Both historically and in terms of the origins of performance and intercultural in terms of the performances now going on, the staging of written texts comprises but a small fraction of the world's theater activity', *Between*, pp. 22–23.

¹⁹ Hartung has carried this idea over from his earlier book, *Spielleute*, p. 16. His example, however, is a sixteenth-century complaint that ascribes a new and different status to the written word, *Fahrende*, p. 53.

²⁰ See Schechner, *Performance*, p. 72 and also Patrice Pavis, *Languages of the Stage: Essays in the Semiology of the Theatre* (New York: Performance Arts Journal Publishers, 1982), p. 160.

²¹ Given that transmission of performance knowledge is oral, minstrels rarely, if ever, needed to own a parchment roll. What protected an individual minstrel's success was not so much the material but rather his own unique performance style. See my discussion of orality and the importance of minstrel memory, 'Minstrel Books: The Legacy of Thomas Wright in German Research', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 87 (1986), 523–36, and Andrew Taylor, 'The Myth of the Minstrel Manuscript', *Speculum*, 66 (1991), 43–73. For a contrasting view based on the discovery of small, inexpensive rolls, see Franz Bäuml and Richard Rouse, 'Roll

me that no concept of ownership of songs existed. He argues that some *Minnesang* was repeatable and exchangeable like encomia. Even some of Walther's songs (both melody and words) could be taken by another singer and applied to another lady elsewhere.²² The conclusion to be drawn is that the performance is the artwork, whereas the text and melody are mere components, so that in this context authorship matters even less.²³

When Hermann sends his song out, it is to be relayed from one singer to another. In the process the original composer disappears, or rather, is included in the first person of the text but is represented by a different performer who takes on that voice. The singer knows the difference and only pretends to be the first to start this song off; the audience, however, does not. And so even this simple song creates multiple realities. Everyone plays it as his own song; the I is always both the performer and the original composer-singer. Since *lob* or song is the subject of *erklingen* it becomes an independent agent that allows for multiple realizations in performance. Thus the rhetoric of the song actually points to the conditions of its dissemination; it travels on its own using performers on its way. In theory then, performers are interchangeable and each performance of Hermann's song is the 'original' and credible one. Therefore, what the audience experiences is a tangible, possibly even memorable performance, but ultimately, it is ephemeral. In spite of the finality of live performances, the song exists independently because it is shared by both performers and audiences in their memory.²⁴

Hermann Damen clearly believed in the power of repetition and dissemination. His song demonstrates that singers borrowed from each other and, as a result, gained greater exposure for everyone's songs. Hermann's attitude toward his songs and other singers, reveals an aesthetics based on the primacy of performance that developed in part out of the mechanics of fulfilling the contract and the constraints

and Codex: A New Manuscript Fragment of Reinmar von Zweter', *Beiträge*, 105 (1983), 192–231, 317–30.

²² Thomas Bein's best example is the *Botenlied*, the song type in which the first person voice is a messenger to the beloved lady, '*Mit fremden Pegasusen pflügen*': *Untersuchungen zu Authentizitätsproblemen in mittelhochdeutscher Lyrik und Lyrikphilologie* (Berlin: Schmidt, 1998). See specifically his chapter 'Der Umgang mit den Texten anderer', pp. 179–88.

²³ Bein, pp. 183–85.

²⁴ A caveat is in order: It is necessary to consider that if a listener hears a song from one singer and the same song from another at a later date, he or she may be conditioned by the first hearing and disappointed in the differences in style and mode of delivery in the second. This conditioning has a strong influence on popular performers today, but I suspect that it is only a concern when the same song is heard a second time very shortly after the first hearing. Given that itinerant performers were relatively few in number in relation to the number of courts and towns available for performance, I doubt that a listener would hear the same song twice within a short span of time.

under which these singers operated. As Hermann Damen indicates, networking not only disseminated messages and songs more rapidly, it also enabled them to learn from each other and to refer to one another's songs in performance. Therefore, based on evidence for sharing, it is reasonable to assume that some minstrels created networks. They told each other which courts welcome performers (as Kelin does), they propagated the idea that a good court is characterized by frequent minstrel visits (as we will see below in Der Unverzagte's song), and they deliberately sent out some of their songs for dissemination by others (Hermann Damen's example).

Hermann Damen was not the first to share his songs. Coming a generation earlier, an itinerant singer called Marner (c. 1200–50) confirms that minstrel co-operation is already part of performance practice. His encomium is already predicated on the performative nature of praise and the co-operative effort of minstrels to make it efficacious. We know very little about Marner except that he had a basic Latin education, became blind, and had reached a ripe age when he was brutally killed.²⁵ In his panegyric to Count Hermann von Henneberg (c. 1245–90),²⁶ Marner states that Hermann's virtuous actions make possible a whirlwind of praise speeding throughout all the German territories:

Ez riuschet als ein windes brût
 ein lop in Tiutschiu lant,
 ez hillet unde schöne lût,
 frô Êre kumt mit im gerant
 dur vil maneges hêren hof, ez fûerent risen unt getwerc.
 Ez riuchet als ein edel krût
 ûz einer megde hant,
 ez ist ein schœnez frouwen trût:
 ein hêrre hât ez ûz gesant,
 dem kumt ez hin wider hein und bringet sîniu tagewerc.
 Wârez lop ist sicherlîchen hôher êren bote,
 ez wirdet hie zer werlte und wûnschet hin ze gote.
 daz hât verdienet er.
 des ritterlîcher reiner muot ie stuont nâch hôher wirde ger.
 driu her man mœhte wol mit sînen rîchen tugenden wern.
 er kan gewern
 und kan der gernden gern:
 werende mûeze er lange wern,
 ze heile erschîne im tages sunne, nahtes mâne und ieglich stern!

²⁵ *VL*, vol. 6, 70–79.

²⁶ According to some scholars this song was possibly composed c. 1247 at the time Hermann was hoping to become the next German king (*VL*, vol. 6, 70–79) although most, like Haustein, prefer not to try to connect specific events and goals to encomia, p. 207. I agree with Haustein for three reasons: we know so little about actual commissions and activities of the didactic poets, reputation needs to be cultivated continuously, and these songs were composed for repeatability.

gerndiu diet, ir sprechent mit mir: âmen! dem von Henneberc.

[Like a whirlwind an accolade roars through the German lands, it rings and peals clearly; lady Prestige comes running with it through many a lord's court; giants and dwarves carry it about. It smells like a noble herb in the hand of a maiden; it is the beloved of a fair lady. A lord sent it out, and to him it returns home bringing the fruits of its labour. Truthful praise is certainly the courier of high renown as it bestows dignity here in this life and creates a path to God. This he has earned whose knightly pure way of thinking has always striven toward lofty eminence. Three armies can be subsidized with the power of his virtue. He knows how to give gifts and to solicit minstrels: giving, may he live a long time. May the sun of day, the moon of night, each and every star shine for his bliss. Minstrels, you join me in saying: 'amen' to [the lord] of Henneberg.]²⁷

Again we have a praise song presented as something that sings and resounds as it flies through the air. Marner compares the song to a whirlwind, and Hermann Damen describes the heights and wide open spaces the song reaches. Marner, too, uses the term *lob* in the sense of 'song' or 'accolade'. Marner is not explicit about the means of distribution, but it becomes obvious in the first two lines that the song has a public existence independent of its composer. Lines 1–8 define song or praise according to the four senses of sight, hearing, smell and touch: the song is visible as a whirlwind; it roars, peals, rings; it smells fresh like an herb; it can be carried and displayed by giants and dwarves. To these sensuous qualities is added that it is the object of love. Then Marner proceeds to explain the effects of an encomium. Like a boomerang it goes forth only to bring home the true news of high renown. It brings dignity, joy and good wishes.²⁸ My claim that such songs are performed away from the patron's court appears to be confirmed here. Marner's lines 9–10 also confirm that the minstrel's success in performance can be ascertained by the host if the song comes back to him sung by another. Marner explains how to verify minstrel promises: if the commissioned song enters into public discourse it proves that the praiseworthy person has increased his renown. Once this has happened, the song returns to its patron via a new performer and attests that the original minstrel has fulfilled his contract. A generation later Kelin demonstrates how a singer guides the song back to the praiseworthy patron.

Who carries this song into all the German territories? Other minstrels who are Marner's colleagues must be the carriers.²⁹ To claim that a performance travels

²⁷ Cited according to *Der Marner*, ed. by Philipp Strauch and Helmut Brackert (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965), str. xv, 4, p. 116.

²⁸ See the discussion of the efficacy of minstrel curses and blessings with regard to Hartmann's *Erec* in Chapter 6.

²⁹ It is well known that minstrels borrowed from each other and adapted each other's works. This song is a perfect example because it shares a great many elements with a Meissner strophe lauding Hermann von Kammin, although we do not know who adapted from whom, Haustein, p. 207.

throughout all German territories like a whirlwind is quite a hyperbole and could discredit Marner were it not for the suggestion that other minstrels perform the song. The singer claims the personified lady Prestige is running from court to court with the song, and in her entourage the dwarves and giants are carrying it aloft. These images conjure up costumed entertainers performing in the staging of an allegorical procession, interlude or happening (*aventure*). But even without such a hypothetical association, the song is based on performance, on making the song visible and palpable to the senses in front of spectators. How the song returns home is not mentioned. Marner never indicates that he is the sole performer, nor that he would be the one to carry it home. In the last line Marner involves other minstrels directly and includes them in a chorus of 'amen', indicating their unanimity.³⁰ Sharing his song in this manner implies that the minstrels will go out and perform the song wherever they travel.

Where does the audience fit in? Performances can vary in duration, tempo, metrical arrangement, mode of delivery, and style and still be successful as long as they energize the audience. Hermann Damen, concerned about reaching as many listeners as possible, knows that as long as the performances are popular, his song (*lob*) will prevail and win the dispute. The key to a successful encomium is the intensity of the performance, that is, the degree to which it energizes the listeners. A performance must establish a link, a temporary bond, between performer and audience. As spectators are drawn into the energy of the performance, they lose some of their sense of individual self.³¹ At that point a collective energy is set free that turns a performance event into a shared experience and places the audience's experience of the songs into public discourse.

Marner's performative ploy of involving other minstrels in the climax of the final line attempts to ensure such a link between the performer and at least part of the audience. He knows not to expect uniform behaviour from the entire group, and so he incorporates part. This performative ploy, the joint singing of a line or word, has to be planned because the other minstrels must be ready to come in on cue. Marner achieves two goals at once. He creates solidarity between all performers available, which adds to the intensity of the performance. In addition, by visibly and audibly incorporating part of the audience into the performance, he breaks down the remaining barriers and enables the rest of the spectators to experience the song collectively. Integrating minstrels in this manner is the equivalent of drawing in part of the audience, so that others feel more involved as well.

Walther von der Vogelweide also confirms what the romances and other didactic singers tell us—that the poet-minstrels communicated. They criticized each other and shared information and compositions probably via their networks. His song illustrates the efforts of poet-singers to sway public discourse through performance.

³⁰ Haustein, p. 204.

³¹ Schechner, *Between*, p. 11.

It is thought that Walther relates how Duke Ludwig I of Bavaria sent him a song as a gift that was brought to him by the Margrave Dietrich of Meissen, who acted as courier for Ludwig (c. 1212).³² But how does one give a song as gift? In what manner was this song transmitted or presented? It must have been sung but by whom? If by a paid itinerant, Walther should have acknowledged him, just as he wishes to be acknowledged, but if sung by a domestic, liveried minstrel from the Meissen court, then the margrave as courier would easily be understood as the one who made the provision for the transfer or dissemination of such a song.

This song, too, addresses multiple audiences at one time because it takes part in the complex discourses of court society:

Mir hât ein liet von Franken
 der stolze Mîsenære brâht:
 daz vert von Ludewîge.
 Ich enkan ims niht gedanken
 sô wol als er mîn hât gedâht,
 wan daz ich tiefe nîge.
 Kûnde ich swaz ieman guotes kan,
 daz teilte ich mit dem werden man,
 der mir sô hôher êren gan,
 got mûeze im êre mêren.
 zuo vlieze im aller sâlden vluz,
 niht wildes mîde sînen schuz,
 sîns hundes louf, sîns hornes duz
 erhelle im und erschelle im wol nâch êren. (L. 18,1)

[The splendid [lord] of Meissen has brought me a song from Frankfurt: it comes from Ludwig. I am not able to give him tribute as amply as he remembered me, except to bow deeply. If I had control of great means as others do, I would share it with the worthy man who has given me such great recognition. May God increase his fame. May the river of luck flow right to him, may no game avoid his aim; may the baying of his hounds, the pealing of his hunting horn resound an echo commensurate with his fame.]³³

According to scholarly interpretation, a singer had criticized Walther's singing severely, and in response, Ludwig had commissioned his gift of a song with the purpose of praising Walther. If the second strophe of song L. 18,1 of the Walther

³² Walther's song is cited according to *Walther von der Vogelweide. Gedichte*, ed. by Hermann Paul and Hugo Kuhn, ATB, 1 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1965), cited hereafter as Paul/Kuhn. The specific context or the date of composition of this poem has not been ascertained, Paul/Kuhn, p. 81. The Lachmann numbering accompanies the text of the poem.

³³ According to Peter Wapnewski, Franken refers to a meeting of Dietrich of Meissen and Ludwig of Bavaria in Frankfurt c. 1212; see the notes in his edition, *Walther von der Vogelweide. Gedichte. Mittelhochdeutscher Text und Übertragung* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei, 1970), p. 273.

corpus is the song from Ludwig referred to (and is not by Walther), it praises Walther above an apparent competitor singer.³⁴ Duke Ludwig's commissioned song does double duty. Besides praising Walther, it enables Ludwig to take part in a debate on aesthetics or the arts, and it gives him a platform that allows for little contradiction because Walther will assuredly support his opinions. Relaying the song via a messenger and singer contributes to Duke Ludwig's and Margrave Dietrich's prestige, and facilitates its circulation outside of their lands. As I have demonstrated, the presentation of gifts is a public activity. This gift of a song is particularly apt because it gives Walther occasion to compose and sing his encomium in response. Thus one insult song gives rise to a sequence of two praise songs creating discussion among audiences.

Who are the multiple audiences? What are the multiple meanings of Walther's song? The person praised is either Ludwig or Dietrich depending on who commissioned the song to be sung for Walther.³⁵ If Wapnewski is correct about the original context of the gift and Walther's song of gratitude, and the earlier one that triggered them, then we have reference to songs that respond to each other and comment on the public appraisal of the aesthetic merits of two composer-performers. When Walther receives a song praising him above another, we find two messages as well as two intended audiences: first, Walther's grateful thank you is directed to Ludwig who commissioned the song or possibly to Dietrich who had the song conveyed. Most likely the intended recipient of the praise is the one who commissioned the song in the first place, and that would be Ludwig. The song is also directed to the audience present when Walther receives the gift. A second level of meaning vindicates Walther's own songs and reputation because he stresses that Ludwig remembered him as he, too, remembers his patron. This message is intended for the original audience as well as for the listeners at hand. What gives us assurance that the original audience is intended to hear this song and that their original opinion, influenced by the original insult, can be corrected? Because Walther's song and the one that triggered it cannot be understood as completely in isolation; they set up a chain of responses. When Walther's songs were disparaged, Ludwig had him praised, and now he praises Ludwig. The poet-singers often used their songs to play off against each other, to volley back and forth. It did not have to be vicious and must have been good fun for the audience.³⁶ This practice certainly could have led to

³⁴ Wapnewski, p. 273.

³⁵ Wapnewski thinks the song addresses Ludwig of Bavaria, p. 273, whereas the Paul/Kuhn edition claims it addresses Dietrich of Meissen, pp. 81–82.

³⁶ In discussing the polemics of the political–didactic poets and their criticisms of each other, Johannes Rettelbach also suggests that they had a performative purpose turning individual songs into musical theatre, p. 191.

the cultivation of open competitions between performers, but initially it may have been intended to retain audience interest over a series of performances.³⁷

Walther, like other good singers, is not satisfied with mere exchange of information. His song of many layers fortifies Ludwig's prestige, and as it does so, it also adds to his own. Walther accomplishes this elegantly because he vindicates himself, all the while taking a humble stance: 'I am not able to give him tribute as amply as he remembered me, except to bow deeply'. Walther is very greatly pleased and charmingly grateful for the recognition. If sung in a light-hearted, intimate style that supports the humble stance without being obsequious, his song can only induce in the listeners a desire for the same kind of public praise. We have here yet again, an encomium that recollects previous songs that affirm Walther's mastery and at the same time seeks favour with new patrons as well.

Thus Walther's and Kelin's songs indicate that the reception and meaning of a song cannot depend on the text alone, nor on a single audience or place. One single strophe often refers to any number of other songs heard elsewhere and events that occurred at another time, in another place. This interconnectedness of strophes is not simply a case of intertextuality but an important aesthetic and performative element. By referring explicitly or implicitly to earlier events, discourses, and performances, a song pulls separate audiences and performances together. Audiences then experience the restored events collectively. I base this claim on the premise that praise songs are more comprehensible and better enjoyed by those few who are familiar with the people and singers involved. Consequently, what the poet performs is a recollecting or remembering, or as Richard Schechner defines performance, a restoration of behaviour. First the singer restores past behaviour by recollecting previous exchange of songs. Secondly, it re-structures part of the memory of those members of the audience privy to the original songs and also offers an initiatory message to others. The frequent mention of remembering (*gedenken*) in so many eulogies points to the audience's knowledge or shared experience.³⁸ But where the audience is not homogeneous, or lacks the background information, the listeners gain a common perspective by the end of the performance and come to share the memory with

³⁷ This type of interaction probably fostered the singing contest (*Sängerkrieg*), a more structured forum for singers to show off their mastery. How it functioned, or even how much may be a literary fiction created by the poet-singers is still unclear. Burghart Wachinger has written the primary study of this set of songs, *Sängerkrieg. Untersuchungen zur Spruchdichtung des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen, 42 (Munich: Beck, 1973). For a more recent assessment see Helmut Tervooren, 'Die "Aufführung" als Interpretament mittelhochdeutscher Lyrik', in *Aufführung*, ed. by Jan-Dirk Müller, pp. 48–66.

³⁸ The motif of recalling important people to memory is found in any number of songs. Those discussed already that contain this motif are Rumelant von Schwaben (*HMS*, III, p. 69:3) in this chapter. Rumelant von Sachsen (*HMS*, III, p. 59: IV, 23) and Der Unverzagte III, 4 are in Chapter 6. Two other examples come immediately to mind: Rumelant von Sachsen (*HMS*, II, p. 369: III, 3); Geltar (*KLD*, I: I, p. 120).

previous audiences who were part of the discourse at an earlier time. Therefore, the kind of collective reception I outline here depends far more on the performative circumstances than on the words of Walther's song.

In order for minstrels to take part in the discourse created and defined by the social milieu of court life, they must be in constant touch with the individuals in their audience, the court retainers, and with each other. It is well known that performers exchange information and performance techniques when they get together for jam sessions as described in Chapter 4. According to the songs thus far examined, communication and networking among minstrels works in two ways to help them maintain the needed court contacts: the network informs and warns minstrels about experiences at several courts and offers a format for exchanging information and newly created or learned material to enhance the repertoire. The information the minstrels pass on to each other is, for the most part, concerned with maintaining their own livelihood, with making known to fellow wayfarers the conditions at courts recently visited so that others might plan their itinerary accordingly. The criteria often discussed are the wealth of each court, hospitality and generosity of the host, his preferences in performance, and detailed characterization of cultural life at each court so that the others know what to expect and even which courts to avoid. Romances and *Spruchdichtung* profess the opinion that the defining characteristic of a well-run court is its popularity with travelling entertainers. Picking up this theme of hospitality, Der Unverzagte (c. 1250–1300) characterizes a healthy court run by a virtuous nobleman as one at which performers freely gather:

Swen gernde liute gerne suochent, der ist eren riche;
 swen gernde liute schiuwent, der ist maniger tugende vri.
 swen gernde liute gerne an sent, der lebet gar wirdikliche
 swen gernde liute ungerne sehent dem won(e)t schande bi,
 swen gernde liute minnent, der ist gerne an triuwen staete;
 swen gernde liute hazzent, seht, der pflit vil valscher raete.
 swen gernde liute prisent, der ist saelikliche geborn:
 swen gernde liute vluochent, der hat triuwe unde ere unt wirdikeit verlorn.

[The person minstrels seek out eagerly is rich in fame
 the person minstrels avoid is free of many a virtue
 the person minstrels look upon eagerly lives in complete dignity
 the person minstrels avoid seeing is clothed in disgrace,
 the person minstrels favour is firm in his constancy;
 the person minstrels despise, note how he practices false counsel
 the person minstrels praise is born fortunate
 the person minstrels curse has forfeited loyalty, reputation and dignity.]³⁹

Der Unverzagte is clearly intent on defining the morally upright and generous host, but a secondary, implied issue seems to be co-operation of performers. If

³⁹ Der Unverzagte, *HMS*, III, p. 46: III, 8.

several minstrels converge on a court, they have to be able to collaborate and draw advantage from such meetings. The German account books corroborate this when minstrels are paid after a court festivity. At such affairs performers offer artistic exchange and collaboration in theatrical interludes and ensemble performances that increase their skills and, therefore, their ability to earn a living. In this song *Der Unverzagte* turns around the manner of dissemination discovered thus far. Instead of making the point that one composer must pass on his work to others for dissemination, here the suggestion is the same as in *Eneit*: many singers should convene at a single court and then each can publicize his own experience as he travels around.

The Event Song

The mission of the poet or minstrel, as defined in the previous two chapters, is to produce the type of song—no matter what genre designation we give it such as encomium or simply *Sangspruch*—that reports on a specific occasion or event. Of special interest is a very specialized type of political song that relates or recollects and, therefore, eulogizes a significant act or event in the life of an important individual or family. Heinrich von Veldeke's celebration of the Mainz feast of 1184 is such a narrative text (but without strophic form) in the middle of the *Eneit* romance where the narrator interprets historical events with unparalleled breadth and compelling force.

Eulogy, based primarily on biographical information and fixed, socially valued attributes, usually takes one of two directions: it follows a moral path when it stresses personal qualities, and a political one when it relates epoch-making events. However, the dividing line between these two possible emphases remains fluid. The type of commemorative we find in the Mainz description, namely a report of a significant event, I call an 'event song'.⁴⁰ This is a more specialized type of encomiastic song than the ones discussed above. A commemorative song would have even greater impact than a simple laudatory one because it is based on a communally experienced public event.

The significance of an event song lies in the fact that it is particularly well suited to the purpose of increasing a person's fame precisely because it refers to the public event the host stages. Such an event song is commemorative in that it describes a

⁴⁰ No official term exists for the type of song I call an 'event song' that recounts a specific event, although *Zeitgedicht* is often used. See Ingeborg Glier's definition of the term *Zeitgedicht* in deBoor/Newald, III/2, pp. 67–74. Helmut Tervooren designates all songs with political content that refer to specific people or contemporary situations as *aktualisierter politischer Sangspruch*, p. 113. Walther is the earliest composer of such songs and Tervooren points out that as time goes by, the later singers give less and less specific information about the event or person they are commenting on, p. 113.

past event witnessed by the singer. Its purpose is also to praise and enhance the reputation of the host. But the poet-minstrel goes further and uses the panegyric to place the event in its historical context and state its significance for the present and future of the audience.

The wayfaring didactic singers practised the composition of this particular type of commemorative panegyric along with numerous other genres necessary for effective entertainment. The point here is that the event song, like other encomia, fulfils the contract between host and singer because it recounts the highlights of the event as supporting evidence of the patron's public prestige and success.⁴¹ The fact that the poet-minstrels wrote political songs is common knowledge. My contribution is to place the songs in the broader context of their reception by audiences and of the social conditions in which they functioned.

The events the singers choose for songs are unquestionably ones that are most fruitful in themselves for promoting visibility and garnering *fama* for both patron and minstrel. These are grand feasts celebrating weddings, knightings, holy days, or military victories. The laudatory songs are most often eyewitness reports relating actual events and do not fall into the category of occasional poetry even though they develop out of the occasion. Thus they are not composed *for* the event but rather as a *result* of it. The minstrel's attendance at the event establishes his credibility which, in turn, ensures that the goal of the song can be achieved. The gifts given minstrels ensure that both donor and event are worthy of acclaim. In addition, the event song was, like Kelin's praise song, rarely sung in front of the person lauded, another reason these purveyors of fame needed to travel extensively.

A song by Walther von der Vogelweide illustrates the characteristics and context of an event song that restores or recollects for audiences a particular festive event. Instead of composing a special poem for the occasion, he commemorated the court festivities. His song is slightly unusual because it focuses rather narrowly on the gift-giving and hardly at all on the event. However, it corresponds well to romance accounts, where the largesse of the host is the dominant theme:

Ob ieman spreche, der nû lebe,
daz er gesæhe ie grœzer gebe,
als wir ze Wiene haben durch êre emphanen?
Man sach den jungen fürsten geben,
als er niht langer wolte leben:
dâ wart mit guote wunders vil begangen.
Man gap dâ niht bî drîzec phunden,

⁴¹ Public failure is also possible. Rüdiger Brandt has shown that the descriptions of unsuccessful public performances are to be understood as a topos in medieval literature, although found mostly in chronicles and romances, '*das ain groß gelächter ward. Wenn Repräsentation scheitert. Mit einem Exkurs zum Stellenwert literarischer Repräsentation*', in *Höfische Repräsentation. Das Zeremoniell und die Zeichen*, ed. by Hedda Ragotzky and Horst Wenzel (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1990), pp. 303–31, (pp. 304–10).

wan silber, als ez wære vunden,
gab man hin und rîche wât.
ouch hiez der fürste durch der gernden hulde
die stelle von den mârhen læren.
ors, als ob ez leंबर wæren,
vil maneger dan gevüeret hât.
ez engalt dâ nieman sîner alten schulde:
daz was ein minneclîcher rât.

[Is there anyone alive now who could say he has seen greater gifts than those we received for the sake of prestige? The young prince was seen distributing gifts as if he didn't want to live any longer: a good-hearted nature brought about many miraculous deeds. They made gifts of no less than 30 pounds of silver alone as if they had chanced upon it, and they gave away opulent clothing. To win the good will of the minstrels, the prince also had the stalls emptied of their chargers, and many a man led away draft horses as if they were lambs. No one there was paying on old debts: what a benevolent decision that was! L. 20,16]⁴²

It is not certain whether the event behind the song was the knighting or wedding of Austrian Duke Leopold VII.⁴³ The celebration, not even described, is reduced to a verifiable grand event that gives rise to the gift-giving ritual and, therefore, the song. The lack of descriptive information regarding the feast itself indicates that the specific intent of the song is to praise Leopold's munificence. Walther speaks as an eyewitness (*wir ze Wiene*). Having attended the affair, he can rightfully claim to know what happened, and therefore, his audience has reason to believe him. Like the narrator in the romances, Walther stresses the conspicuous display of affluence in his description of the gifts. With hyperbole and the outdoing topos, he highlights only those aspects of the event that are a credit to Leopold's personal renown. Leopold is shown to surpass every one of his predecessors in the quantity and quality of his gifts. Although the gifts are the customary silver, clothing, and horses, Walther uses particularly vivid imagery to emphasize the vast, even excessive quantities distributed.

Walther includes himself among the minstrels (*wir, gernden*) and makes perfectly clear the importance of Leopold's generosity—he needs to win their favour and support. The focus of the song is so extremely narrow, stressing only the relationship between host and minstrel, while the connection between historical event and the song is so tenuous, that external information is required to place the song in context. Walther may well have had an informed audience; in fact, many could have been in

⁴² Paul/Kuhn, p. 72.

⁴³ It is not certain whether the poem was written lauding Leopold VII of Austria's knighting (1200), his engagement (1203) or wedding (1209) according to the notes in the Paul/Kuhn edition of Walther's poems, p. 72.

attendance at the celebration he only alludes to. This indicates that any event suffices for a panegyric, as long as it furnishes vivid details or food for the imagination.

The introduction to the song successfully demonstrates that Leopold, having surpassed all his predecessors with his largesse, must indeed be viewed as a paragon for future hosts. Thus praise songs like this one display the kind of exemplary behaviour that adds to the individual's fame and also could easily augment the examples in any mirror of princes.⁴⁴

The performance context is also pertinent to the interpretation. Presumably a host did not want a eulogy in order to bolster his own self-esteem, but to augment the esteem in which others held him. This being the goal, it was not realized by singing the song in the host's, in this case, Leopold's presence. Since this song describes and restores past action, it is quite possible, although not likely that it was intended to be performed in front of Leopold. Instead, by singing it elsewhere, Walther could transmit the information and praise his host before others. He could have conceivably sung this at Leopold's court in a very different context. The past tense account precludes delivery during the occasion itself. Although it has been assumed that such event songs were sung before the host, this need not be the case except for occasional poetry. Songs like Walther's and Kelin's indicate that the performance occurred later and intentionally so.

There is much to be gained by a delay. By singing it afterwards at another court, Walther is as much commemorating a historic, public event as using it to augment Leopold's renown. Because the song is removed from the occasion and composed to be sung later, it gains the repeatability that occasional poetry lacks. The song continues to be appropriate. Each time he sings it, he is building Leopold's reputation and securing it for the future. But the repeatability of a song is not equivalent to rote repetition. Repeated performances and the original message are changed by new audiences because they also depend on the knowledge of the listeners. Walther's song illustrates wonderfully how several changes in meaning and reception occur when a song is performed for different audiences in different venues.

An audience living a great distance from Vienna might not have much knowledge about Leopold himself and could interpret the song as a typical, serious event verse as some scholars do.⁴⁵ Discerning listeners might notice the hyperbolic listing of the value of the gifts and the image of draft horses being led away like lambs and think the accolade more effusive than necessary. But listeners closer to the Austrian dukes

⁴⁴ Barbara Haupt also argues along the same lines: the purpose of literary feasts is to act out exemplary conduct as described in mirrors of princes, pp. 21–23.

⁴⁵ Jeffrey Ashcroft reads this as Walther's acknowledgement of Leopold's generosity. He thinks Walther is giving credit when it is due to Leopold because the duke did not hold a grudge against him. He bases this on the penultimate line: 'No one there was paying on old debts', 'Die Anfänge von Walthers politischer Lyrik', in *Minnesang in Österreich*, ed. by Helmut Birkhan, Publications of the Institute of Germanic Studies, 31 (Vienna: Halosar, 1983) 1–24 (pp. 22–23).

would certainly know that Leopold had the reputation of a miser.⁴⁶ This knowledge turns the message upside down. Now the song becomes a satire and can cause laughter at Leopold's expense.

The question remaining is whether Walther would have sung it before Leopold or let the song simply come back to him via another singer. Whether the song was to be understood as a satire or serious eulogy depended very much on the performer's mode of delivery. It could be sung seriously, tongue-in-cheek, as a reprimand or, it could be sung in a more exaggerated and thus insulting manner that would bring the listener to recognize the truth behind the excessive praise. Since audiences delight in ambiguity, dissimulation and posturing are all part of the performance possibilities for this song. However the performer must present an unambiguous posture, so that the audience can see around the action and perceive it and its opposite.⁴⁷ Thus we find great interpretive variety in song even when the words, rhythm and melody do not change.

Since encomia of this type are based on an event attended by the poet-minstrel, the term 'event song' defines better this specific type of song than the broader terms encomium, and *Zeitgedicht*. In addition to the laudatory function, the term makes explicit the specific situation which gave rise to the songs and the manner in which they were disseminated. 'Event song' is useful as a concept distinct from other types of eulogy because it reflects the perceived source and social importance of reputation, namely the evaluation of public acts. The song, then, is effectively an extension of the event itself. This subgenre also yields a new perspective on the activities and function of itinerant poets and suggests a new interpretation of these songs based on performance dynamics. Its commemorative content reports on current events and, like all political poetry, is occasionally able to elevate them to epoch-making, historic proportions. Therein lies its importance for *fama*.

In the case of Heinrich von Veldeke, the potential impact of the Mainz section on contemporary attitudes is greatly strengthened by the fact that he has placed his statement of the poet-minstrel's mission within the world-historical context: the concept of *translatio imperii* conjoins past and present. Yet with the advent of the Christian era, the force dividing the old from the new guides world history in an entirely novel, linear direction. Within this context, the recording, praising, and retelling of epoch-making events carries enormous affective impact. Heinrich is aware of the power of eulogy especially when it is grounded in historiography. He employs it to shape the impressions and attitudes of the audience. The wayfaring poets also recognize this power. Among their repertoire we find works commemorating specific events.

⁴⁶ Ashcroft presents evidence from Latin sources that clergy (who have their own priorities) typically accused Leopold of avarice and that he was widely known for this vice, pp. 16–18.

⁴⁷ Schechner, *Performance*, p. 183.

I wish to pursue this very specialized encomiastic form because these songs have not yet been interpreted from the perspective of the vernacularization of historiography and the contribution of poet-minstrels to contemporary attitudes toward history. Because event songs are the most specific or extreme representatives of the laudatory genre, they best illustrate the minstrel's role in the process of evaluating public events to shape a sense of history and identity. These songs refer to an event in order to provide experiential evidence upon which to base an appraisal of the host. Praise that is based upon the concrete actions of the host presents him as a model figure that can and should be emulated by future hosts. (This is one of King Arthur's functions in the romances.) To the extent that event songs successfully commemorate and re-create the activities of the ranking, wealthy members of the realm, they exemplify the minstrel's potential impact on reputation and attitudes.

The impact of such event songs on people's interpretation of contemporary events is significant and sometimes lasting.⁴⁸ These songs have a long tradition in the Germanic *Preisgedicht*, composed and sung after a battle, an event that has always been regarded as epoch-making. When sung for the army after a victory, it consolidated memory and built reputation for important personages based on their achievements such that they became a model for the future. The performance enabled the participants to re-live the events and solidify their collective interpretation (memory) that then formed the basis of any future re-enactments of the events. The Scandinavian skaldic poets, known for their extemporaneous verses, were certainly aware of their potential for interpreting their past and therefore, shaping the attitudes of their listeners. In the *Orkneyinga Saga* (early thirteenth century) we are told how three companions, after overpowering a warship, discussed the event. When Earl Rognvald recited a verse telling of it, they discovered that they each had a different version: 'Each man was giving his version of it.[...] Then some said that they would cut a fine figure if they did not all have the same story to tell about so great an exploit [...] they agreed that Earl Rognvald should settle the matter, and that afterwards they would adopt his version of it'.⁴⁹ Thus an authoritative version was created and retold.

Therefore, the event song is particularly interesting because in it we see the power of words, melody and mode of delivery together to form opinion and shape attitudes. It places the singer 'in the know' as if he were one of the court policy makers. That kind of involvement is typical of the didactic poets because it supports their

⁴⁸ Helmut Tervooren warns that the impact of political poems has not been investigated adequately to be sure how much influence the poet-minstrels had, p. 112. In contrast, Ulrich Müller attributes great influence to singers. He agrees they were capable of destroying someone's reputation, 'Sangspruchdichtung', p. 189. See also Volker Schupp, "Er hât tûsent man betoeret". Zur öffentlichen Wirkung Walthers von der Vogelweide', *Poetica*, 6 (1974), 38–59.

⁴⁹ Cited from *The Orkneyinga Saga*, trans. by Alexander Burt Taylor (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1938), Chapter 88, p. 297.

authority. In addition, event songs are particularly suited to show off the minstrel's artistic mastery. Its subject matter and fixed format demands ingenuity requiring the singer-composer to produce new themes and images.

Not all events deserve equal embellishment and praise. Some are historically more significant than others, and it is the minstrel's responsibility to distinguish between them. The occasion selected for praise can have far-reaching effects if it is shown to be significant for a large number of people, and if the timing of performances is felicitous. The singer is able to shape opinion to the extent that he is in control of his audience; he 'makes' history by reporting on an event (which he presumably witnessed) and interprets it for his audience. Heinrich von Veldeke gains enormous temporal depth because the Mainz feast is set against the backdrop of Roman imperial legacy encased in a lengthy narrative. In contrast, the short verses typical of the *Spruchdichter* simply cannot achieve this historiographic dimension; they are far more limited in scope and restricted to shorter periods of time and to recent events. Only a truly exceptional singer such as Walther von der Vogelweide can encompass in a song an almost equivalent time span.

Walther von der Vogelweide's Christmas song (L. 19,5) illustrates how the poet-minstrel's estimation of the political and historical importance of the event is contingent upon the praise and prestige he can ascribe to the host. Walther uses the event to present his particular interpretation of the ruler's pride of place in world history when he records the Christmas celebration of King Philip's court, 1199. In the preceding summer, Philip of Swabia and Otto of Braunschweig were in the midst of competing for the German kingship. Each contender had difficulty taking control and attracting enough supporters to defeat the other but by autumn, the conflict was decided when the Landgrave of Thuringia and the Duke of Saxony converted to Philip's camp. With the struggle between the contenders in the background and a greatly strengthened base of support, he decided to hold a grand court feast in Magdeburg at Christmas.

In recording this celebration, Walther selected a ceremony already designed to display publicly Philip's power and prestige, to applaud the endorsement of Thuringia and Saxony, and to augment further his base of support. Clearly the purpose of the song was to record and publicize Philip's historic achievement of winning decisive support. But what is the interpretation Walther placed upon the event?

While Walther's description agrees with contemporary chronicles, it also illustrates the potential power of a singer to shape and reinforce for his audience a particular interpretation of such events. (After all, he reaches a broader and larger audience than chronicles do.) The objective details of the event simply take second place. Primary stress is placed on forging a metaphorical structure that can shape the listeners' attitudes towards Philip and events surrounding the dispute over the throne. To influence his audience, the singer eschews reason and logical argument in favour of a compelling linkage of metaphors and their collective, affective impact. The allegory thus created steers opinion and propagates his radical interpretation of

events in support of Philip. This song, then, is more important for the impact of its unstated association of ideas than for its factual accuracy, even though Walther relies on the audience's assumption that he is accurate. Obviously, Walther cannot claim that uncontested kingship has been achieved, nor does he have the authority to assert that Philip is the legitimate king and emperor, but he can convey that opinion by means of a powerful allegory which forces the desired associations during performance.

This short, twelve line strophe is a daring exhibition of Staufer imperial politics and ideology. Walther situates the political event of the court celebration in the context of the Christian salvation story and uses it to define the Holy Roman Empire's role in world history:

Ez gienc, eins tages als unser herre wart geboren
 von einer maget die er im ze muoter hâte erkorn,
 ze Megedeburc der künec Philippes schöne.
 dâ gienc eins keisers bruoder und eins keisers kint
 in einer wât, swie doch die namen drîe sint:
 er truoc des riches zepter und die krône.
 Er trat vil lîse, im was niht gâch:
 im sleich ein hohgeborniu küneginne nâch,
 rôs âne dorn, ein tûbe sunder gallen.
 diu zuht was niener anderswâ:
 die Düringe und die Sahsen dienten alsô dâ,
 daz es den wîsen muoste wol gevallen.

[In Magdeburg on the day when our Lord was born of the Virgin whom he chose as mother, King Philip entered with pomp. He, brother of an emperor and son of an emperor, walked clothed in a single mantle, although his names are three. He bore the true sceptre and crown of the realm. He strode with dignity and not at all in haste. The high-born queen, rose without thorn, dove without gall followed with equally measured pace. Such excellent courtly demeanour was nowhere else to be found: The nobles of Thuringia and Saxony served so expertly that the wise men would have to approve. L. 19,5]⁵⁰

On the day of the Nativity, this viceroy celebrates at once Christ's birth and his own entry as temporal Prince of Peace under the aegis of the Trinity. Embedded in the opening scene of the public procession of King Philip is the Nativity of the Prince of Peace. Beginning with the verb and ending with the subject, the independent clause stating Philip's entrance frames the adverbial phrases referring to time and place of the Nativity, that is, the festival Philip is celebrating. This delayed identification of the subject creates an anticipation on the part of the listener who is ready to attribute the action of the verb to the first suitable noun. The listener thus encounters and sorts out three ambiguous, yet false solutions: 'Herre', (Lord, lord);

⁵⁰ Paul/Kuhn, p. 70.

maget, (Virgin, virgin); *muoter*, (Mother, mother) until finally, *künec philipp* resolves the search. The result is that Philip's arrival and the Birth are telescoped, and Philip is said to enter when the Lord was born. With the suspension of time, the sense of location is also lost. The two locations merge as Philip enters in the presence of the Virgin at the time and the place of the Nativity since the location of the Birth is identified by the presence of the Virgin, which is in this case, Magdeburg, the city dedicated to her.⁵¹ As the birth into the world of the Prince of Peace coincides in the narrative with the entrance of the terrestrial prince of peace, the two figures become indistinguishable, and one might conclude that Philip is the Christ. This is not an impossible interpretation because the Nativity is the day on which God took human form. In this case we see him in the form of Philip, *advocatus dei*, temporal prince of peace.

Additional symbolism carries this interpretation further to the extent that all of Christian salvation history and secular imperial history are covered in just twelve lines! In Walther's words the three signifiers, King Philip, an emperor's brother and an emperor's son are separate entities yet truly a unity by blood under one mantle. This unity in a trinity draws the true Trinity into the procession, and makes Philip the worldly embodiment of the deity. Philip has his own proper name, but he inherits his identity from his family and its imperial rank. The trinity metaphor implies then, that Philip is in his essence or nature, already emperor. Since the imperial insignia identify their bearer to be the rightful occupant of the throne, Walther creates for Philip a legitimacy as *advocatus dei*, who serves the true Prince of Peace. Furthermore, possession of the imperial insignia and their successful display on a holy day with the support of powerful representatives of the realm is symbolic proof of God's choice for emperor. This view is consistent with Staufer imperial politics although Walther could not legally title him emperor because he was not yet crowned.

The typological frame carries the political message concisely and convincingly. Having incorporated Philip into the Nativity scene and integrated him by analogy into the Trinity to demonstrate his legitimate claim to the imperial throne, it stands to reason that Walther dared to complete the allegory to express his political message in its entirety. The last three lines applaud the service performed by the Landgrave of Thuringia and the Duke of Saxony who carried the imperial sword. The public gesture of support and adoration made by these two powerful, new converts to Philip's cause wins the approval of the three Wise Men. Led by the guiding star, the Magi were the first three converts to Christianity and the first to honour and confirm the kingship of Christ. Their assumed approval (*müeste*) of the 'conversion' and public reverence performed by the Landgrave and the Duke at Christmas, 1199 verifies that they, too, serve the rightful king and that their homage is, therefore,

⁵¹ Associating Philip's queen with the Virgin is effortless because when Irene came from Constantinople to Germany she formally took the name Maria.

elevating and not humiliating. To the extent that they followed the guiding star, Walther's *leitesterne*, which is the *Waise* (gemstone) in the imperial crown that led them to the true king, they as the new 'wise men' chose correctly in following Philip's rising fortune or star.

There is some scholarly disagreement as to whether *wîsen* was actually used at that time to refer to the Magi.⁵² It may simply have meant 'wise men of the realm'. However, if we consider the coalescence of another set of figures—the Virgin and Philip's queen—then the coalescence of the Nativity and Epiphany becomes more plausible and we see that the structure of the song is a bold integration of symbols into an allegory which guides the interpretation of the literal events. The theme of the Virgin as essential supporting figure is introduced right away by the reference to Magdeburg. And Philip's wife, who was actually called Maria, is given the epithets of the Virgin (ll. 8–9). Thus we have the queen of the realm fully crowned in royal procession indistinguishable from the Virgin, Queen of Heaven.

Judging from art historical evidence, it was apparently not unusual when portraying the story of the Virgin's life to depict the Adoration and not the Nativity. For example, an ivory book cover from Metz, c. 880, contains the Annunciation, Adoration of the Magi and the Massacre of the Innocents.⁵³ The iconography of the Adoration frequently depicts the Virgin enthroned as is the case on the Hildesheim Doors (c. 1015) where the Magi are received by a Virgin seated on a throne. The invocation of the Magi thus meaningfully completes the allegory. With the Duke and Landgrave representing the Magi, Walther telescopes the Nativity and Epiphany and integrates the allegory with the political message.

Representing Epiphany and Nativity together in one scene, although unusual, concentrates the potency and impact of the song. The significant detail occupying central position is Philip's possession and public display of the imperial insignia. Their display is punctuated by the lone simple, declarative sentence. It forms the

⁵² There is still some doubt whether *wîsen* could at that time refer to the wise men from the East, although Peter Wapnewski's view that it does refer to the Magi, is still defensible, 'Die Weisen aus dem Morgenland auf der Magdeburger Weihnacht (Zu Walther von der Vogelweide 19, 5)', *Lebende Antike. Symposion für Rudolf Sühnel*, ed. by Horst Meller, Hans-Joachim Zimmermann (Berlin: Schmidt, 1967), pp. 74–94. I feel that since Walther associates Philip's public presence as German king with Nativity and Trinity, developing the allegory to include epiphany is entirely meaningful within the context and structure of the song. In contrast, Eric Marzo-Wilhelm suggests 'jurist' for *wîsen*, *Walther von der Vogelweide zwischen Poesie und Propaganda. Untersuchungen zur Autoritätsproblematik und zu Legitimationsstrategien eines mittelalterlichen Sansgespruchdichters*, Regensburger Beiträge, B 70 (New York: Lang, 1998), pp. 97–98.

⁵³ The book cover is reproduced in Roger Hinks, *Carolingian Art: A Study of Early Medieval Painting and Sculpture in Western Europe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974), plate 21 and is listed with a shelf number Fonds Lat. 9388, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris.

rhythmic climax of the song and of the public procession Walther describes. The compelling symbolism confirms Philip's claims to the imperial throne. Assurance of God's grace and the association of Philip with the Trinity is based on Stauffer ideology first articulated by Rainald of Dassel in the middle of the twelfth century. Even if we reject the interpretation of *wisen* to mean the Magi, an epiphany is still the central message of the song, because the actual event Walther eulogizes is the first public manifestation of the new Holy Roman Emperor. Walther's description of Philip's public appearance brings with it the promise that civil war is over, for God has chosen the new emperor who is the temporal prince of peace.

When brought alive in a good performance, the density of the imagery uniting Philip and the deity and the consistency of the typology are so affectively compelling that an audience could be moved to accept the interpretation and the implied vision for the future—at least for the duration of the song. As listeners, we see in our mind's eye a king and emperor chosen by the Grace of God as we relive the procession. All the signs Walther interprets for his public confirm that Philip is indeed the true emperor, the guarantor and protector of the *treuga dei* and *pax dei*. Since the desirability of peace cannot be denied, especially during this period of civil war, all who hear the song must agree with its conclusion. With the balance of power on Philip's side, Walther suggests that even if Philip is not everyone's preferred candidate, all must support him for the sake of peace.

Christmas was a commemorative festival with ritual aspects. Its goal was to re-enact or restore the events in such a way that the passing of time between the original event and its restoration was not perceived. This suspension of time fused past and present, dissolved spatial differences and united the participants. For them, the event recurs, is re-constituted and can be re-experienced repeatedly.

Medieval audiences were accustomed to ritual suspension of time. In the mass, for example, the event of the passion is restored and re-experienced not as an event in time, but as a continuous occurrence in the eternal present. In ritual the community experiences the release from the temporal condition that separates past from future, separates individuals. Thus the participants experience a state outside of time and sense of unity or *communitas* outside the social order. I suggest that this could be tapped by the poet-singer and used to restructure how the spectators remember the events.

By definition, performance restores and re-members past action.⁵⁴ This means that secular performance could tap into the habit of re-experiencing significant holy events. Typological thinking makes possible such a re-experiencing in which the human actors are seen to re-enact and, for the moment, even to participate in the identity of the original or true figures.⁵⁵ The typology in Walther's song is strong

⁵⁴ See Chapter 3 above and Schechner, *Between*, pp. 35–40.

⁵⁵ See Karl F. Morrison's article on a comparison of the liturgy to play and the individual's participation in the identity of Christ, 'Anselm of Havelberg: Play and the Dilemma of Historical Progress', in *Religion, Culture, and Society in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in*

evidence for the possibility of exploiting this habit for the restoration of a political event. When Walther's performance commemorates a special Christmas feast that, in turn, commemorates the event (Nativity), he enables his audience to re-experience the two festivals together—the original nativity and Philip's feast. For the duration of the song at least, it is quite possible for the audience to believe in the union of Philip with Christ, the Queen with the Virgin, and those doing homage with the Magi. The song recreates events in such a way that the audience experiences the presentation of the new king.

The telescoping of Christ and Philip, the Virgin and the queen, the Nativity and Epiphany, and by implication, the epiphany of the Duke and Landgrave clearly suspends time and space. The typology also implies that the recent feast day celebration, which some in the audience might have attended, is equally significant. Even more importantly, with the imperial insignia in public view, the scene presented looks very much like a coronation. The song restores the event of Philip's feast in visual and metaphorical terms while its tone claims accuracy in its detail and authority (in knowing what pleases the wise men). In the process of merging events widely separated in time and location, actual time and space are concentrated in the time and space of performance. The process of telescoping continues to have an effect even beyond the content or inside of the song to give the sense of being there. One may say, the compression of time is actually three-tiered: the Nativity and Epiphany is the first level, the formal, public celebration of temporal power by Philip is the second, and the time and location of the restored and re-membered event during performance is the third. The result is a fusion of the reality of the event and the reality of the audience collectively re-experiencing the event through the performance.

Walther's song reconstructs and re-members the present in that it interprets the past, makes it available to the listeners in their present and allows them to experience it. The performance then becomes part of their own experience and is incorporated into memory. The effect is that their new present undergoes restructuring. They can now reflect upon the event, and what it portends for their own future. This may influence their previous, unquestioned attitudes as well as spawn new ones. This type of song has the potential, therefore, to create a new configuration of attitudes in the audience. Walther would hardly have composed this song if he had not expected to be understood by at least a few listeners. As composer, he enacts the role of the 'wise men' by choreographing the general, public reception of the event. When performed with just the right intensity using rhythm, gesture and voice modulation, this song's immeasurable metaphorical and affective force could easily have created a new, contemporary epiphany for some of the audience.

Walther's song stands out as a masterpiece in several ways. He places his patron effectively in world historical context, an achievement the later didactic poets can only approximate (even Friedrich von Sonnenburg). The allegorical construction in so few lines is unique and makes it timeless. Although knowledge of historical events is necessary to understand the specific symbolic level of meaning, the fundamental message is that such events can be restored. For this reason he eschews the outdoing topos, common laudatory attributes, and the over-worked generosity theme. Yet he is able to raise Philip to a status beyond human mortality. In general, event songs emphasize actions and events, and give tangible evidence of a person's worth, rather than merely praise virtue in general terms. In this sense event songs can be more persuasive and provide minstrels a more credible stance than adulations and at the same time, grant them more freedom in constructing a metaphorical frame.

The impact of the song depends on the credibility of the singer and on the audience's willingness to accept the veracity of the report. That is, the audience must believe Walther was there and that he is re-structuring and recollecting for his listeners what took place and how the event was conducted. The surface claim of the song—that it informs—must be fulfilled. This means that the symbols cannot stand without some connection to reality. Without the event having taken place, the song and the entire metaphorical frame are useless. The eyewitness stance lends credence even if the minstrel was not in attendance. No one would have been able to disprove Walther's claim to have seen what he says he saw because he has said nothing that another guest could falsify.

Walther, the master of song and modes of delivery, appears to be confident that he will be believed and that he can manipulate the response of his public. Of course, we have little idea what impact Walther's text and performance had on Philip's cause. The song probably had a performance life span of three years without needing changes but after Hermann of Thuringia went over to the opposition in 1202, the text as we have it was no longer politically influential; it became a historical song.⁵⁶ Taken together with other songs of the same genre, Walther's song reveals that a minstrel dare go quite far in taking sides and steering interpretation. Limits are set only by the minstrel's ability in composition and performance.

It is in terms of shared function and shared genres that I consider the wayfaring didactic poets successors to Walther von der Vogelweide and Heinrich von Veldeke. They are, like Walther, itinerants in a service role who may have aspired to become members of a noble household, a position Walther achieved only occasionally.⁵⁷ Fully aware of a shared mission, their songs express their conscious commitment to evaluating the process by which panegyrics are produced and performed. For the most part, they sing with confidence, for they would not have sung, if they had not expected to be heard.

⁵⁶ Marzo-Wilhelm, p. 94.

⁵⁷ See Michael Curschmann's analysis of the issue of Walther as an itinerant poet, 'Walterus Cantor', *Oxford German Studies*, 6 (1971), 5–17.

Almost a century after Walther's Christmas song, Friedrich von Sonnenburg (fl. 1250–75), who was an itinerant singer possibly from a ministerial family, recounted the royal coronation of Rudolph of Habsburg on 24 October 1273 in Aachen.⁵⁸ When he presented the coronation as an epoch-making event, he strove to persuade his listeners. Friedrich's tactic is to assert the truth of his information by citing a miracle and using the attestations of eyewitnesses. Rather than relying on logical argument, the song is governed by images and selected embellishments of the facts:

Si vragent wie der künic von Rome Ruodolf mir behage
 er behaget mir als er sol sit daz er got behagete an dem tage
 dor in ze vogete (als ich iu sage)
 gap aller kristenheit;
 Unde als er got behagete (also der Brunecker uns jach,
 daz er und manic tusent man ansihticliche wol ansach)
 ze Ache überm münster daz geschach:
 hoch, lanc, wit unde breit
 Ein schoene kriuze swēbete ob im die wile daz er saz
 gekroenet und die wihe enpfiencc--hie bi so weiz ich daz,
 Daz in got durch der vürsten munt uns zeinem vogete hat erwelt.
 nu si er dir, almehtic got, in dinen vride gezelt.

[They ask how I like Rudolph, King of Rome. He pleases me as he well should, because God was well pleased with him on the day he appointed him viceroy for all of Christendom (just as I'm about to tell). And when he pleased God, it happened (in the way Brunecker testified that he and many thousand men saw it with their own eyes) in Aachen, above the cathedral: a beautiful cross—high, wide, and thick—floated above him [Rudolph] while he sat there wearing the crown and receiving the unction. This is how I know God chose him for us through the voice of the electors to be his viceroy. Almighty God, may he now be secure in your protection.]⁵⁹

This song with its political message can have maximum impact because it is infinitely repeatable. Yet it has been criticized for this very trait. Achim Masser disparages the literary quality and the blatant promotional intent of Friedrich's song, 'in der die wundersame Kreuzeserscheinung während der Krönung Rudolfs in Aachen kolportiert wird' [in which [he] peddles the miraculous appearance of the cross like cheap wares].⁶⁰ He and others since the Grimms have misjudged these songs because they did not understand that dissemination was one of the requirements for a poet-minstrel's song.⁶¹ Consequently to evaluate such songs

⁵⁸ For what little we know of Friedrich von Sonnenburg's life, see *VL*, vol. 2, col. 962–65.

⁵⁹ *Die Sprüche Friedrichs von Sonnenburg*, ed. by Achim Masser, ATB, 86 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1979), str. 30.

⁶⁰ Masser, Introduction, p. xxv.

⁶¹ Ulrich Müller and Franz Victor Spechtler also recognize repeatability as an essential component of the singer's song and base their studies of poets and their melodies on this very

properly, it is necessary to recognize that these constraints guided composition, and were not by definition a detriment as modern aesthetics would have us view them. It is not only true that such songs were meant to be disseminated, it is, in fact, an essential characteristic of this and other encomia that they must be repeated in order to be effective. Precisely because a song re-creates an event from the past, it is suitable for repeated performances. Its popularity and survival then, depends on the quality of the song and skill of the singer.

Friedrich offers an argument and is not peddling mere opinion aimed at a gullible audience. With details reduced to a minimum, he presents his assessment of the affair in the typically self-assured stance of one used to making such evaluations. His confident tone stems from his expectation that he will be listened to, and that his claim cannot be disproved. Speaking confidently, as if he had been asked, and as if his opinion were valued, he proclaims Rudolph's suitability for kingship based on the miracle at his coronation and is fully aware that the listeners interpret his account within the framework of theocratic kingship.

Friedrich introduces the direction of the argument in a neutral manner first: if God accepts Rudolph, he has every reason to do likewise. Of course, this premise prepares the audience for a miracle, for how else would one recognize divine approval. And only after stating his incontestable means of arriving at a judgement does he proceed to build a case for the vision that leads inevitably to his conclusion. Since this is not a first-person report, and Friedrich was probably not present, he is very careful to build credibility. Even before mentioning the vision, he feels it necessary to substantiate its occurrence by inserting a truth claim (l. 3), by listing witnesses (ll. 6–7), and using the legal term, *jehen* (to testify). Finally, after so much preparation, he describes the appearance of a monumental cross hanging in mid-air above Rudolph while he is being anointed. This is, of course, an unmistakable sign from heaven proving Rudolph's theocratic kingship (ll. 7–10). Friedrich did not invent the vision of the cross because several contemporary references are available in chronicles.⁶² Nevertheless, we must give him credit for disseminating it, which is for supporting Rudolph's election in a popular genre.

Taken together, the gradual build up to the climactic vision, the proper name (Brunecker),⁶³ the truth claim (*als ich iu sage*), and the epic number (*manic tusent man*) do not assuage the feeling that he anticipates some scepticism from his

fact, see in this case, “‘Si vragent wie der künic von Rome Ruodolf mir behage’: Friedrich von Sonnenburg über Rudolf von Habsburg’, in *Fragen der Liedinterpretation*, ed. by Hedda Ragotzky, Gisela Vollmann-Profe, Gerhard Wolf (Stuttgart: Hirzel, 2001), pp. 135–57 (p. 142).

⁶² Müller and Spechtler cite descriptions from the *Magdeburger Schöppenchronik*, *Sächsische Weltchronik* and the *Colmarer Dominikaner-Chronik*, p. 155.

⁶³ Since we do not know his identity, we cannot judge how much his name meant to an audience, Masser, Introduction, p. xix.

audience who may not readily accept the claim of a miracle, or may be opposed to Rudolph's election. One must assume that a singer who structures his presentation as thoughtfully as Friedrich does, would know his listeners well enough to choose the most compelling argument from among the ones they are willing to accept. Any significant effect on an audience depends upon the political affiliation of the listeners and on the quality of the performance. A song describing a miracle has a great potential for popularity to the extent that people would be willing to hear it frequently because it makes a significant event familiar. In that case the song would certainly gain from repetition because it is not necessary to know much about the historical facts to understand the song. Such songs are similar to Christmas carols that proclaim a miracle. People enjoy the familiarity of the songs, even if not all believe in the miracle they relate.

What makes a successful performance and retains audience interest? Several elements in the song can contribute to its success. First, Friedrich is careful to establish the good will and co-operation of the audience and his own authority with the introductory *si vragent*, a common strategy. This allows him to interact directly with the audience. Secondly, a medieval performance is always relatively public and has no focus. This means that the eye and ear are not controlled by a camera or a darkened proscenium theatre. Instead, audience members are free to look around and observe each other. According to Schechner, this openness heightens the collective aesthetic experience, and may create greater receptivity.⁶⁴ At the same time, it is the singer's task to focus everyone's concentration on the song. His voice is the most important tool for creating this sense of intimacy, but facial expression and gesture must also give the impression that the singer is sharing his song only at this moment and only with the present audience.

The third means of capturing the audience lies in the nature of restored behaviour in event songs. Friedrich's song reconstitutes a past event and recovers it for the audience to experience. This reconstituted event or performance is two levels removed from the actual event. In composing and rehearsing the song, the minstrel first deconstructs or dismembers the elements of the original event and then reconstructs or re-members them for the audience by means of physical performance. In this case the original event, namely Rudolph's coronation, was a carefully planned and choreographed ritual ceremony. But real life does not always follow the plan. Sometimes the unexpected happens. Friedrich claims a miracle happened, and so in the dis-membering and re-membering process of producing a song and performance, he incorporates the miracle into the set of recollected elements. The performance merges the original, indicative event together

⁶⁴ I rely heavily on Richard Schechner's work, *Between*, p. 61. He derives most of his definitions of performance from theatre in various cultures, but his insights are extremely helpful here. See especially Chapter 2 'Restoration of Behavior' in *Between*.

with its restored, subjunctive counterpart.⁶⁵ It is completely pre-planned and structured by the performer, and the audience knows this.

The audience recognizes that an actual event has been blended with a re-creation, yet need not relinquish its double perspective. The spectators can re-experience the event in two ways: those who attended the original event now integrate their memory of the original experience with the experience of the song. Hearing the song performed can permanently change their (first-hand) memory; it can replace or modify significantly the original memory, even if the spectators completely disagree with the singer. Those audience members who did not attend the original event now share the experience with the others by means of memory created during the performance. These people may have a greater tendency to accept the singer's version because they can fill in the gaps with their experience of similar ceremonies. Thus Friedrich offers the audience an experience of the event and with it his reason to support the new king, Rudolph of Habsburg. What the spectators gain is a collective experience of the restored and re-membered event that gives them the basis for their own discussion, memories and convictions.⁶⁶

Walther and Friedrich are not alone. Several poet-singers composed event songs even though the percentage of these songs in the poet-minstrel's corpus is rather small.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, many *Spruchdichter* appear to have involved themselves in political decision-making with the expectation that they would be listened to. In addition to singing event songs, some readily offer explicit advice, as does many a minstrel in romances. The Latin panegyric by Marner in ms M of Benediktbeuren is one of a number of such songs composed in order to influence political decisions by magnifying the patron's reputation. In Marner's song, his subject and candidate for

⁶⁵ Schechner, *Between*, p. 38.

⁶⁶ Here I go beyond what Müller and Spechtler stated recently, that such songs were performed 'in engagierten, diskutierenden, sich bekämpfenden Gebrauchsgruppen', p. 149. I suggest that the experience of the song itself was enough to fix a specific interpretation in the minds of some audience members, especially if the topic had already been a subject of discussion.

⁶⁷ Tervooren has counted the songs referring to a specific political situation: for Meissner he finds less than 10%, Rumelant von Sachsen less than 15%, Friedrich von Sonnenburg about 20%, and Bruder Wernher about 50%, *Sangspruchdichtung*, p. 113. There are nevertheless a number of event songs that can be shown to function like the ones discussed. For example, Sigehar on Ottokar I's Prussian campaign (*HMS*, II, p. 361: II, 1) Rumelant von Sachsen's account of the murder of Erich I of Denmark *HMS*, III, p. 68: X, 3–5, and Sonnenburg's report of Ottokar's battle against King Stephen of Hungary in 1271 (Masser, str. 52). On Rumelant's songs regarding the Danish court, see articles by William Layher, 'Meister Rumelant: German poets (real and imagined) in thirteenth-century Denmark', *ZfdPh*, Sonderheft 119 (2000), 143–66 and Reinhold Schröder, 'Rumelant von Sachsen, ein Fahrer aus Deutschland in Dänemark', in *The Entertainer*, ed. by Anderson, pp. 15–45.

the bishopric, the prelate of Maria Saal, is named and praised according to the traits long deemed appropriate for courtiers and bishops.⁶⁸

Pange vox Aedonis
nobilem praelatum de Solio,
Qui gaudet in donis,
et caret vitiorum lolio;
Est jocundus, laetus et affabilis,
in promisso stabilis,
providus, prudens, honorabilis. (ll. 1–7)⁶⁹

[Sing, oh voice of the nightingale of the noble prelate of Maria Saal who is blessed with gifts and lacks the weed of vice. He is pleasing, joyful and affable, steadfast in his promises, prudent, wise, and honourable.]

The singer is creating memory as he makes specific suggestions to the audience by proposing his candidate for the vacant See of Seckau:

Sed si non est princeps
cathedrae scilicet officio.
Ut clerus deinceps
memoret quando fit electio. (ll. 22–5)

[But since there is no prince in the episcopal office, then may the clergy remember [him] when the election takes place.]

Remembering the right person at the time of the election is the crux of the song just as it is the key metaphor in all laudatory poetry. Marner's choice for the bishopric is, of course, his host, Heinrich von Zwettl of Maria Saal. In this case we also know the result of the election: Heinrich was indeed elected bishop in 1231.

Since such panegyrics were intended to influence political decisions, it is very tempting in this case to speculate about the role this particular song played in the decision-making process. Unfortunately we have no documents commenting on the song at all. We cannot measure and cannot speculate on the degree of influence such political advice songs actually had. However, it is possible to conclude from such songs that the singers and a number of patrons were well aware of their potential. They knew that verses and even less formally expressed opinions could very well increase someone's reputation and therefore change the perceptions upon which people based decisions. Marner's panegyric to Heinrich von Zwettl is special

⁶⁸ In Chapter 1, 'The Courtier Bishop', Stephen Jaeger lists the entire catalogue of virtues, in *The Origins of Courtliness—Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals—939–1210* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985). He points out that *laetitia* and *jocunditas* are typical attributes of rulers but are a serious flaw when exhibited to excess, p. 171.

⁶⁹ *Der Marner*, Strauch, str. x, p. 94.

because it was timely only until the date of the election and would be of no interest beyond a select audience who knew Latin. This means that the song could not be effective if repeatability were the only key to the singer's influence. Yet Marner, knowing that this song would be short-lived in his repertoire, still found it worthwhile to compose and sing it; and his patron supported him because he must have felt that such songs strongly influence an audience, even if heard only once or twice.

Even though the number of encomia and event songs makes up a small percentage of the *Spruchdichter* corpus, they make up a very important portion of the repertoire. While the texts themselves are artistically and rhetorically complex, the form and melody are less so. This enables the singer to recombine strophes spontaneously during performance. Melody, when simple, makes the words all the more memorable. Event songs and encomia, because they are content-filled and multi-layered, are a challenge for the minstrel as I have tried to demonstrate. At the same time, all of the poet-minstrel repertoire reflects the pride of the performer and many pieces also reveal the joy of performing. Although political songs are serious in their kernel, like the moral-didactic compositions, their performance can offer an aesthetically pleasurable experience. They exemplify most explicitly the ethical, political and artistic contribution of poet-singers to society.

Tervooren also takes up the question of a singer's impact pointing out that Walther's songs are read as if he had the emperor's and the pope's ear in every case, yet we simply have no information on the relationship of singer to patron, nor on the reaction of audiences.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, a song containing moral advice or political commentary would more easily find a lord's ear than a direct statement by a minstrel. Reaching a large number of listeners as minstrels did added to their credibility and increased their impact. In sum, the network of minstrels repeating and relaying songs as indicated by Marner and Hermann Damen, suggests that audiences frequently listened with interest and reacted quite favourably. And German account books prove their claims are true.

I hope to have shown that performance of song re-members the past and present of the audience. It does this by transforming time, space, and persons and accomplishes this through words, music and movement. Medieval performance avoids illusionistic devices and instead, relies on the audience remaining completely aware of the reality and make-believe of the performance. To recognize that a performance is a re-membering of a past event does not depend on direct knowledge of that event. Aesthetic pleasure, then, is derived from being able to enjoy the artistry of the performance and the song. This requires recognizing the difference between the actual event and its reconstruction.⁷¹ Elements or details of the original event are added or subtracted in the process of artistic re-membering. The symbols, metaphors,

⁷⁰ Tervooren, *Sangspruchdichtung*, pp. 111–12.

⁷¹ Schechner, *Between*, p. 62.

and images in the reconstruction describe and embellish; they belong to the realm of re-creation, not to the original event. As Friedrich's song illustrates so well, the symbolic nature of the event is first elaborated as it is reconstructed for performance. Most occasions chosen for event songs are indeed already designed to display power and dignity, as Rudolph's coronation, Philip's entry at Christmas, and Leopold's wedding. Nevertheless, the aesthetic component is determined by the constraints of the minstrel's encomiastic task and the artistic means of accomplishing it. A discerning listener knows the conventions and rules, and judges aesthetic merit accordingly.

My final point is that the affective nature of performance art re-structures the audience's memory. This is especially true of event songs. During performance the past event comes into the spectator's present. The spectator then comes away having truly experienced the reality of the performance that is the reconstructed event. Thus it is the listener's experience during performance that is real, that he or she takes home. It is the person's present thinking that has been re-membered along with the event. Thus reality is found in the audience's reactions and views regarding the performed event and not in the words or melody alone. When the past event is re-membered for the audience, they experience it as real. They remember it as a genuine experience. And this experience carries embedded in it the encomiastic, political interpretation of the actual event. If the performance captures the audience, then the poet-minstrel shapes public discourse by feeding the audience topics and steering the direction of thinking and by transporting the spectators between spheres of reality.



Fig. 4. Woman reading, man playing a lute, from a miscellany, c. 1300–1400, cod. 174, folio 33^v, Vienna, Austrian National Library, reproduced by permission of the Institut für Realienkunde, Austrian Academy of Sciences.

This question of multiple realities, each the negative of all the others, does not merely point to a peculiarity of the stage but rather locates the essence of performance: at once the most concrete and evanescent of the arts.

Richard Schechner

CHAPTER EIGHT

Towards an Aesthetics of Medieval Performance

This study began with two fundamental premises: medieval literature was enjoyed, or at least experienced as performance art. Medieval performance consisted of many combinations of place, occasion, audience composition, and assortment of performers, such that performance art was not separated consistently into genres or media. Rather, it allowed for numerous re-combinations in a wide range of possible formats. This range of possibilities is also true for performers themselves. They are characterized by flexibility, adaptability, and liminality. Hence they are not easily categorized or regulated. Their indeterminacy has led this investigation in several directions. I have examined their image and status in society, their quotidian lifestyle and activities, their own performance strategies, and their influence on diverse audiences. In spite of the minstrel's indeterminacy, the sources revealed a common thread in their survival strategies that identifies their dual purpose: to do what is necessary to benefit both their livelihood and their performance art. The fact that they made use of every opportunity to advance these goals and to bring their artistic offerings to the public demonstrates how closely intertwined the performing arts were with quotidian activities.

What has been learned from the minstrels' lifestyle and textual artefacts are the social functions they defined for themselves, and the aesthetic strategies they devised in order to cultivate and educate their audiences. The thesis put forward here is that skilled performers playing to a receptive and discriminating audience influenced that audience emotionally during the intensely experienced present of the performance. Since performance by definition restores behaviour, it re-membered the medieval

audience's past. In the process, the spectators gained a double perspective as they moved between spheres of reality, between the 'as if' performance and their own previously accepted views. A good performer thus transported the audience to a new reality, a new present. This new present is located in the audience's reaction to the entire performance and not in the words and melody alone. In other words, performance strategies for presenting each song, epic, or romance were repeatedly adapted to produce the greatest aesthetic impression. The genres of event song, historical epic and romance, and encomium were found to be the most explicit vehicles for restructuring the memory and perspective of the audience. Therefore, it is not surprising that most songs and romances expressed the poets-singer's pride in his performance art.

Between performances, minstrels subsisted by working a variety of odd jobs since full-time employment was rare. Their multifarious tasks reveal the way in which they pursued their double purpose. Especially by focussing on two constants—the performer's need to augment the repertoire and to attract new audiences—we tracked the cluster of duties that dovetailed with their abilities and needs. Thus one set of talents served two goals. Their skills were initially most valued in the military sphere. On a campaign, they listed troops for the muster, signalled the charge with pipes (or later trumpets) and drums, carried messages and translated them, mounted the watch, and collected information about the enemy. When free of other duties, they consoled the wounded with melodies and songs. It also follows that many performers like castle watchmen, and drummers and trumpeters on the battlefield, were able fighters. The well-documented minstrels at the English court who were listed also as sergeants-at-arms were certainly skilled with weapons. Such skill was just as helpful in performing a battle within a theatrical scene or *entremet* in order to be believable to an audience of military men. Hence almost all the myriad jobs they performed at court, in towns and elsewhere, served performance requirements.

In peacetime, their duties were essentially the same: they corroborated the identity of individual vassals and their heirs for purposes of renewing fiefs and keeping track of land rights. They easily kept themselves informed because they needed to travel. Domestics, too, travelled on their own circuits when not busy on errands or needed at court. When performers met on the road, they held jam sessions, exchanged information, learned new material for their repertoire, and played to new audiences. For many, their performance talents and experience travelling fostered a gregarious nature that made them useful in locating the whereabouts of individuals. Such inquisitiveness had prompted Thomas of Chobham to criticize them. Two important traits for a performer, namely a quick wit and the ability to improvise, enabled many to win the confidence of persons of authority. Hence itinerants could easily be hired as domestics. Both were capable of serving as masters of ceremony, watchmen (possibly the watchmen of dawn songs), messengers, spies, parasites, singers, and instrumentalists. When performing, they were able to fulfil audience requests: they could play instruments, sing, compose music and lyrics, dance, read from a book, and possibly even juggle. With their multiple talents they made

themselves especially useful at grand court feasts where it was the responsibility of domestic minstrels to ensure protocol, announce and usher the guests, and oust the uninvited. The domestics together with temporary hires produced and directed the entertainment for the banquet, formed ensembles, played fanfares and dance music, praised great lords, and sang of brave deeds. And yet, in spite of all these services, minstrels, even domestics, suffered from marginalization in varying degrees.

The ruling groups in medieval society were at odds with minstrel activities and labelled them pariah. The negative image of performers was created by Church decrees and individual theologians in the early centuries of Christianity and then perpetuated throughout the centuries under discussion here. However, what is more important for understanding the status of minstrels is the incompatibility of their performance lifestyle with procedures of the legal system and the ethics of the Church. Performers seldom lived a settled existence in a neighbourhood or parish because they travelled a great deal to reach new audiences. Consequently, their activities could not be regulated. Moreover, they could not be protected as shown by the beating death of the count of Rappoltstein's lutenist in the abbey of Münster in St Georgental in the fifteenth century.

Worse yet, when performing, they exhibited a performing body that required exaggerated and tension-filled movement that transgressed the moral ideal as articulated most explicitly by Hugh of St Victor. He required a subtle and restrained comportment in which inner virtue is reflected in outer composure; yet performers must transgress this ideal of moderation if they are to project a role, song, melody, or mood with clearly comprehensible expressions and gestures. Even instrumentalists need to project an exaggerated, lively persona before their listeners. For this reason, a medieval or modern performer is never the same person on stage as he or she is off stage. The poet-minstrels who recited, read, or sang offer a more obvious example of shifting roles. In performance they presented a persona and played a number of roles, all of which were different from their own everyday identity.

Performance, then, is a liminal experience because it transports the performer between identities. As seen in Kelin's encomium, he was not himself, but was also not not himself. Hence he moved in and out of several identities as he sang. Such reconstructed or rehearsed shifts in identity create an experience of 'as if for the first time' for the audience. This 'first time' impression is fictive in contrast to the true, socially acknowledged transformation or coalescence of past and present accomplished by ritual like the mass. Consequently, the liminality or indeterminate identity of the minstrel caused medieval moralists to distrust them. Schechner reminds us that such distrust still exists when he states that performance is 'behavior that is "put on"'. This is what gives theater its bad name' even today.¹

Despite their pariah status, minstrels as a group played successfully to appreciative audiences. Ironically, part of the evidence for this comes from the

¹ Schechner, *Between*, p. 121.

opposition itself. While some churchmen continued to denigrate minstrels, others discovered the usefulness of performance strategies in capturing an audience. Theologians like Honorius Augustodunensis explained the mass in dramatic terms, and clergy began to minstrelize the liturgy in an effort to attract larger numbers to the mass. To be sure, not all clergy approved, and performance methods even posed a contradiction for many. Consequently, if minstrel strategies were being adopted for use in sacred liturgy, then minstrels themselves were viewed as competitors. Certainly, moralists have always claimed that performers were offering immoral entertainments, but the tendency of clergy to minstrelize makes evident a far more serious conflict: minstrels were drawing the faithful away from the mass.

The competition intensified after the Franciscans were established because they were attempting to attract general audiences for their sermons in the same language and arena as performers. And they were especially vociferous in their denigrations of minstrels. As we have seen, these popular itinerant preachers stood in direct competition primarily with the *Spruchdichter*. Preachers and poet-singers clashed on two issues. First, both groups identified themselves as bringing moral instruction to all types of people in towns, villages, and at courts. The preachers covered some of the same topics as the singers: praise songs of Mary, explanations of the bestiaries, and lessons on virtues and vices. Second, they employed many of the same performance strategies. For example, they sought out their listeners in market places and open fields where large crowds could gather, addressed the audience directly, or introduced a topic with a question supposedly posed by a listener. Delivery was also crucial: the bigger than life body language, gesture, pace of speech or singing, and modulation of the voice promoted the desired audience reaction. One might say both sets of performers had to offer a spectacle in order to sway audiences.

The *Spruchdichter* had to respond to this challenge. If minstrels were to compensate for the repeated accusations of immorality directed against them, they needed to convince audiences of their own authority. Thus a large number of songs and, therefore, of performances by *Spruchdichter* were indeed conceived to fight the competition by creating and disseminating a positive image. These poet-minstrels (including writers of romance) tell us in narrative and song that they were historians, reputation builders, and moral watchdogs. Several explicitly set themselves up in analogy with a donor-intercessor model in which they recommended the virtuous lords to God. As eyewitnesses minstrels recorded events and selected the worthy for whom they would create renown. And when they were not eyewitnesses, they collected their information from everyone they came into contact with including their fellow performers; that is, they gathered and exchanged information to feed their repertoire whenever possible. In their songs they referred to well-known events, especially if members of the audience had attended. This strategy, as several singers illustrated, buttressed their credibility because it made use of the information audience members already had which they could bring to the performance for comparison. When performed convincingly, these claims enabled the poet-singers to obtain commissions and fulfill their social role of creating *fama*.

Minstrels also demonstrated their ability to fulfil their own prophecy. The guarantee offered by Heinrich von Veldeke—that a multitude of minstrels could praise a ruler far and wide—points to a genuine network among minstrels. This idea that minstrels disseminated each other's songs to ensure that the values they expressed and the lords they deemed great would gain in reputation and be remembered is corroborated in later *Spruchdichter* songs. When Hermann Damen sang, 'I shall strike up an accolade. I want to pass it on to the minstrels so that they can sing it before the best people reliably throughout the lands', he claimed great efficiency for a network that extended beyond the circuit and lifespan of any single performer.²

To make all this happen, the poet-singers' performances had to fulfil several criteria: the poems had to bear up under repetition (this is especially important for signature pieces), they also had to be transferrable from one minstrel to another, the singer had to maintain his connection to the network, the singers as a group created a fictional interaction and rivalry among themselves to stir audience interest in their newest songs, and the performances always had to emphasize that they make true what they express in their encomia. Thus a performance served multiple purposes: it advertised the performer, gave him an opportunity to audition for new patrons, provided material for other minstrels, informed and educated the audience, and attempted to restructure memory and re-member the past in the listener's experience of the song.

The performer, therefore, could not be successful without a receptive audience. Even if competition and low social status had not been a problem, minstrels still had to seek out new audiences. Furthermore, they also had to establish common ground with the listeners on each occasion. For information on the composition of audiences, our textual artefacts lead us repeatedly to the courtly arena and to noble audiences, because court society carried primary responsibility for the arts. However, we have every reason to assume that itinerant poet-minstrels in general sang for all types of audiences in urban, court, and rural environments. In addition, wealthy audiences consisting of burghers and nobles shared aesthetic tastes. By about 1250, a substantial number of nobles lived in cities where they were joined by the socially upwardly striving burgher class who participated in the support of art and entertainment. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, for example, the sought-after audience in Vienna consisted of a mixture of nobles whose interests centred on the city, and wealthy burgers of the city council that gradually married or bought their way into the nobility. These burghers opened their own homes for many of the dances and dinners that were part of the great celebrations held by the Babenberg and later the Habsburg rulers. It follows, then, that also for simpler, less formal entertainments, the tastes of the city council members were quite similar since they were emulating those socially above themselves and enjoying performances together

² Herman Damen, *HMS*, III, p. 168: v, 8.

with them. Studies on city culture have shown that cities did not have an urban artistic culture of their own if what we mean is a particular group of patrons supporting entertainers who developed a characteristic genre, style, or set of themes. As a result, when we acknowledge the fact that courtly culture served as model for the city dwellers, it does not imply that any given court, even when known as a literary and musical centre, ever gave rise to a clearly discernible school, genre, or artistic style of its own.³ Consequently, it is useful to consider that in every performance arena the audience was most likely composed of some who were sophisticated listeners as well as many others who were not.

The extant sources generally point to a small coterie of literati who can fully appreciate the complex compositions the poet-singers offered. In contrast, we know far less about audiences in a non-courtly milieu such as small towns or occasional fairs and markets. Almost any type of gathering, especially one where people had a bit of leisure to sit down, chat, and partake of food, generated a performance environment. Such a context could occur anywhere. Yet we have no idea of the artistic expectations of such audiences, of their familiarity with historic or political events, or literary conventions. Thus *Spruchdichter* and singers of epic would often perform in various places at non-feast times before a variety of listeners. Whether at a planned and formal or a spontaneous affair, minstrels were often facilitators for entertainments such as dancing and group games. For courts, the account books record performance activity taking place more frequently during the long evenings of the winter months than at special festivals. Consequently, we should assume that performances were not limited to certain places or occasions, and that styles and media were adapted to the setting and needs of each audience.

Nevertheless, the more significant issue is the level of comprehension and enjoyment audiences experienced during minstrel performances. Aesthetic enjoyment depends on the way audience and performer interact. The most satisfying performance is one in which the performer's skill matches the audience's understanding. Any imbalance is worse than a low skilled performer before a low comprehension audience.⁴ Ascertaining this fit between performer and audience relies on performance strategies that are, in fact, an integral part of the aesthetic process that strives to achieve the emotional transportation of the audience. Involved here are aesthetic principles: materiality of performance, variation on convention, and the tension between audience expectations and the performance itself.

Materiality of the performance refers to the minstrel's physical presence. His task is to create a receptive, harmonious group out of individuals. The live performer,

³ Ursula Peters, *Literatur in der Stadt. Studien zu den sozialen Voraussetzungen und kulturellen Organisationsformen städtischer Literatur im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1983). She discusses patrons and literary production in Basel on pp. 113–37, concluding on pp. 126–27 with the close interaction between burghers and nobility. See also the section on the city of Würzburg, pp. 138–40.

⁴ Schechner, *Between*, p. 133.

specifically his projection of a bigger than life body movement, and tension in both body and voice, produce an intensity, an energy between audience and performer which then induces a physical and emotional response. Since a live performance is always experienced in the spectator's present, its affective impact is immediate. (There is no catharsis when watching television.) To create a successful link, the two parties must agree on the programme. Once the minstrel has ascertained what the listeners want to hear and discovered the level of audience sophistication, he can negotiate the programme and adapt the presentation to their level.

Literary and performance conventions formed the foundation for creativity by allowing for variations that surprise and delight the audience. The interplay of words, images, musical phrases, and melodies from song to song allowed the composer-singer to work within well-known parameters to re-use and build on genres, melodies, rhyme schemes, and popular themes. Kelin, Marner, Friedrich von Sonnenburg like the others produced variations on each other's phrases, metaphors, and melodies to create inter-connections between performances and fictitious rivalries among performers. Variation, then, was more than a popular technique; it was the aesthetic principle that allowed genres like *encomia* to blossom. Consequently, convention and variation defined audience expectation and formed the structural support of any performance. For the performing arts, variation also had the added advantage that the tension created by moving from the familiar form to a new variant provided a fruitful means to inculcate conventions and raise aesthetic standards.

For affective impact, minstrels built on the tension between audience expectation and their own compositions, and it is this tension that produces meaning. For this process to work successfully, clarity and precision in performance are essential. The details are certainly specific to each audience and culture, but the fundamental strategy appears to be universal: the singer-composer must work against audience expectations to create the tension that produces meaning and the desired emotional response. For example, the structure in many medieval romances sets up a familiar, harmonious, and readily recognized courtly setting only to break it down and rebuild it in a new but readily comprehensible way. Likewise, *Spruchdichtung* frequently builds on a theme in order to shift the perspective in a surprise twist at the very end. However, these structural strategies become meaningful only when the performer chooses the appropriate vocal inflections, gestures and movements, and then performs them with maximum clarity. As Schechner states, 'The same may be said of dissimulation of all kinds so popular in theater: lies disguises, double plots, ironies. In every case the performer's problem is to be clear about the lie, to be convincing in both aspects of the situation so that an audience can see around the action and perceive it and its opposite, text and metatext, simultaneously'.⁵

⁵ Schechner, *Theory*, p. 183.

I wish to offer a final example of the minstrel's strategies for appealing to listeners and creating rapport with the audience. Successful poet-singers listened to but also manipulated their audiences. In Song xv, 14, Marner negotiates a programme with those who gather around him based on their expectations and levels of artistic sophistication. This song is an especially useful example, because scholars, lacking a performance theoretical perspective, have failed to recognize its performance strategies. This text has remained a puzzle because two lines of questioning have been pursued: first what genres, heroic song or short narrative, is Marner referring to; and, second, does his list represent the typical repertoire of a *Spruchdichter*?⁶ Unfortunately, the song answers neither of these questions. Nevertheless, given that this song existed in a performance situation, it reviews for us several performance strategies that intensify audience–performer interaction.

Marner follows a three-fold strategy: he takes stock of the gathering listeners and curries their favour, negotiates a set of possible topics with individuals to create cohesion in the group, and finally, captures their attention by exciting their curiosity:

Sing ich dien liuten mîniu liet,
 sô wil der êrste daz
 wie Dieterîch von Berne schiet,
 der ander, wâ kûnc Ruother saz,
 der dritte wil der Riuzen sturm, sô wil der vierde Ekhartes nôt,
 Der fünfte wen Kriemhilt verriet,
 dem sehsten tæte baz
 war komen sî der Wilzen diet.
 der sibende wolde eteswaz
 Heimen ald hern Wîchen sturm, Sigfrides ald hern Eggen tôt.
 Sô wil der ahtode niht wan hübschen minnesanc.
 dem niunden ist diu wîle bî den allen lanc.
 der zehend ênweiz wie,
 nû sust nu sô, nû dan nû dar, nû hin nû her, nû dort nû hie.
 dâ bî hæte manger gerne der Nibelunge hort.
 der wîgt mîn wort
 ringer danne ein ort:
 des muot ist in schatze verschort.
 sus gât mîn sanc in manges ôre, als der mit blîge in marmel bort.
 sus singe ich unde sage iu, des iu niht bî mir der kûnec enbôt.⁷

[When I set out to sing my [epic] songs to people, the first wants [to hear] how Dietrich escaped, the second where King Rother ruled, the third the battle of the Rus, the fourth Eckhart's death, the fifth [wants to hear] whom Kriemhild betrayed, the sixth would rather [hear] what happened to the Wilzen folk. The seventh wants something like the attack of Heime or Wittich, the death of

⁶ These questions are posed by Strauch, pp. 180–81, and Haustein, p. 222.

⁷ Song xv, 14, Strauch, pp 124–26..

Siegfried or Ecke. The eighth wants nothing but courtly *Minnesang*. The ninth finds all this boring. The tenth can't make up his mind, now this way, now that, then here, then there, now back, then forth. At the same time, others want [to hear] of the Nibelungen hoard. The one who values my word less than a farthing; his mind is stuck on money. So my song penetrates into many an ear about as neatly as lead carves into marble. Thus I sing and relate to you what the king did not have me disclose to you.]

Customarily, the audience expresses its interests whereby every listener may request a different topic or song. But the scene here is slightly different. Since Marner is singing about listeners in general and not referring to the group gathering before him, the lines about individual interests set a scene and criticize a different group, not the people in front of him. The meaning of this list of epic heroes and motifs depends completely on the way it is performed; its meaning can be changed drastically with voice modulation, intonation, physical gesture, and facial expression. Yet one thing is certain: Marner is not insulting his listeners as some scholars have thought because no performer can remain stubborn to the point of allowing an audience to walk away no matter what he may personally think of the assemblage. If the listeners implied in the song have the power to dictate topics, then the singer must quickly grab their attention to prove he is able to satisfy their requests. But he can also manipulate his listeners.

I find at least two possibilities for delivery. Marner may be advertising the various narrative topics he is prepared to relate and acting like a barker to pull in a crowd. The lines critical of listeners could easily be directed with a hand gesture at persons not yet committed to his group. The second possibility is that he is entering into negotiations with those who have joined him. In this case he offers a variety of choices in order to see how the group reacts to each hero or motif. This can be done in a humorous tone implying that his present audience is better equipped to make a request and to reach a compromise. Marner may not even be able to sing about all the heroes he mentions, but uses the listing to attract attention. His voice, facial and body expressions can also steer audience interests as he speaks excitedly about some heroes and acts bored with others. The text also reveals an audience with diverse interests and opinions, indicating that some members are only interested in the Nibelungen treasure, others not in any of the minstrel's words. But these lines can be presented several ways: the criticism may be a tease to encourage the undecided to commit themselves, or it can be directed against others to flatter the immediate listeners into feeling they know how to appreciate the singer's performance. The attitude of the singer, whether presented in a comical, sarcastic, or accusatory manner, would be enhanced by melody and intonation, so it is possible that this is a fake criticism that pre-empts requests and steers the audience in the direction he wants. Marner's process of evaluating the mood, interest, and experience of the audience allows him to change pre-planned and rehearsed bits, and to improvise at the level the listeners can appreciate and understand. Although he builds on the

conventions of performance art in his compositions, his flexibility allows him to entertain any audience.

Marner lists eight topics, and although any could be deleted without changing the song, we must assume he was able to satisfy people who wanted to hear epic song. At line 15, the eight topics or demands expressed by these fictitious and fickle individuals remain unresolved. The shift in tone in lines 16–19 has led scholars to think Marner is serious when he complains about those who do not value his words (ll. 16–17), and ‘that his song penetrates into many an ear about as neatly as lead carves into marble’ (l. 19). The singer’s anger may well be part of the ploy and be directed across the room with a gesture towards a person who is indeed not listening. That would give the audience a sense of exclusivity that paves the way for the final line. That final line is pivotal to the song because it redirects the interests of the listeners and resolves the negotiations. The singer now knows what the audience wants by the way they reacted to each hero and topic.

The resolution comes in the form of a hook in the very last line in which Marner claims authority and special knowledge for himself and stirs the curiosity of the group. The shift to direct address links the singing voice with the audience. By lowering his voice to a whisper, he pulls the listeners physically closer as he offers to sing, but claims he possesses information from the king that he has been told *not* to divulge. Their curiosity aroused, the audience may well forget their specific requests at this point and be ready to hear what he knows. In a performance situation where the listeners can simply walk away, this move would unite the audience members and give the singer an opportunity to capture their attention with a first song that easily leads into an event song or encomium.

The extant texts prove that poet-minstrels were artistically ambitious. These singers were not simply trying to survive and collect coins from just any passer-by. Far from being simple, these excellent multi-layered songs place high artistic demands on the audience. Although not everyone needed to understand all the levels and allusions to enjoy the performance, the more sophisticated listeners were in a position to derive an enriched aesthetic pleasure by discovering the many layers and marvelling at the artistry of the songs.

Performance of epic and song was a mixed-media treat for the eyes, ears, and mind. Therefore, the most important insight gained from this study is that aesthetic and affective impact was achieved primarily through intensity of performance and depended only partially on the literary techniques of the text. Minstrels had to be theatrically alive to create the intensity that captivates and perhaps even convinces the audience. Whether high or low, the intensity controls the manner of audience involvement and participation; the listeners may be consciously reflective or unconsciously involved, but they must be emotionally electrified and transported. As a result, performance can be dangerous. It makes present what has already passed, makes dead heroes speak; it telescopes the past and the present so that what was in memory is re-lived and re-remembered in the present. Ultimately, the affective influence of a captivating performance can change people’s view of their world.

Appendices

Appendix A

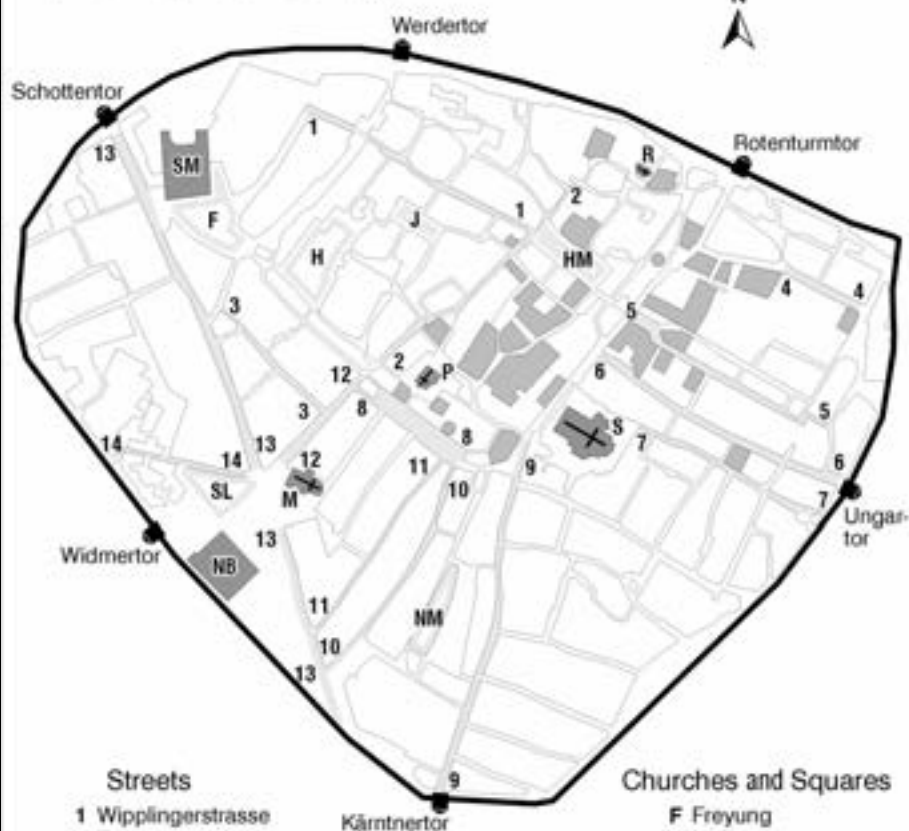
1400 22. Apr. Ernennungsurkunde des rappoltsteiner Pfeifferkönigs Henselin, der Pfiffer: [Charter appointing Henselin the piper to the Piperkingship of Rappoltstein]

Ich Schmassmann herre zu Rappoltzstein. Tun kund mengelichen mit diesem Briefe, die in ansehent oder horent lesen, nv, oder hernoch. Alss seliger gedechnusse min lieber herre vnd Vatter selige herr Brunne Wielent herre zu Rappoltzstein, das Kunigrich Varender Lüte zwischen hagenawer Vorste vnd der Byrse, dem Ryne vnd der Virst vor Ziten verlichen hett, heintzmann Gerwer dem Pfiffer. Das selbe Kunigreich der genannte min herr vnd Vatter selige, vnd sine Altvorderen herren zu Rappoltzstein, yewellen, als lange das, das nieman verdencket, zu einem rechten erbe lehen gehabt hant. Vnd ich vnd min Bruder Vlrich ouch herr zu Rappoltzstein, Nv ze Ziten das selbe Lehen ouch zu lehen hant von dem heiligen Römischen Riche. Vnd aber nv der vorgedacht Heintzmann Gerwer der Pfiffer mir dasselbe Ambacht das Kunigrich Varender Lüten vffgeben hat, von krankheit wegen sins libes, das er das nit bewerben, gesuchen noch versorgen mag. (Als das harkommen vnd billig ist.) So erkönne ich mich mit diesem mine offenen Briefe für mich, vnd den Egenanten Vlrich minen bruder, da sich dez selbe Kunigrich Varender Lüte das Ambacht gelichen habe. Vnd lihe es ouch mit diesem mine offenem briefe, mit willen egenannten heintzmann Gerwers des Pfiffer, henselin, mime Pfiffer vnd varenden manne. Also das er das selbe Kunigrich vnd Ambacht, für basser me sol haben, besizzen, nuzzen, vnd niessen, glicher wise, vnd in aller der mossen, als es sine vorvarenen, des selben Ambachtes von der herschafft wegen von Rappoltzstein genuzzet, vnd genossen hant One all gewernde. Vnd dar vmb so bitte ich alle Fursten geistliche vnd weltliche, alle herren Ritter, Knechte, Stette vnd mengelichen den diser mine brief gezoget wurd, das sie den egenannten henselin mime varenden manne der varenden Lüte Kunig getrieweliche beraden vnd beholffen sigent. Vnd inn schutzzent vnd schirment zu dem

selben Anbachte min vnd mins bruders egenant, lehen, zu allem dem, do zu er denne recht habe, von des selben Sins Ambacht, mins lehens, wegen, vnd durch mins gewilligen dienstes willen. Vnd vmb das ich den allen welle das tunt, vnd mich das furkunt iener desten halt wil tun; waz ich weis das Inen lieb vnd dienst. Vnd das zu vrkunde so habe ich Schmassman herre zu Rappoltzstein vorgeannt, min Ingesiegel tun hæncken an diesen brief. Der geben wart zu Rappoltzwiler an dem nechsten Cistage noch dem heiligen Ostertage. Do man zalte von Gottes Geburte Vierzehn hundert Jahre.¹

¹ Cited according to Martin Voegelis, *Quellen und Bausteine zu einer Geschichte der Musik und des Theaters im Elsaß 500–1800* (Strasbourg: Le Roux, 1911) pp. 78–79.

Appendix B: Landmarks and Streets of Vienna (Thirteenth Century)



Streets

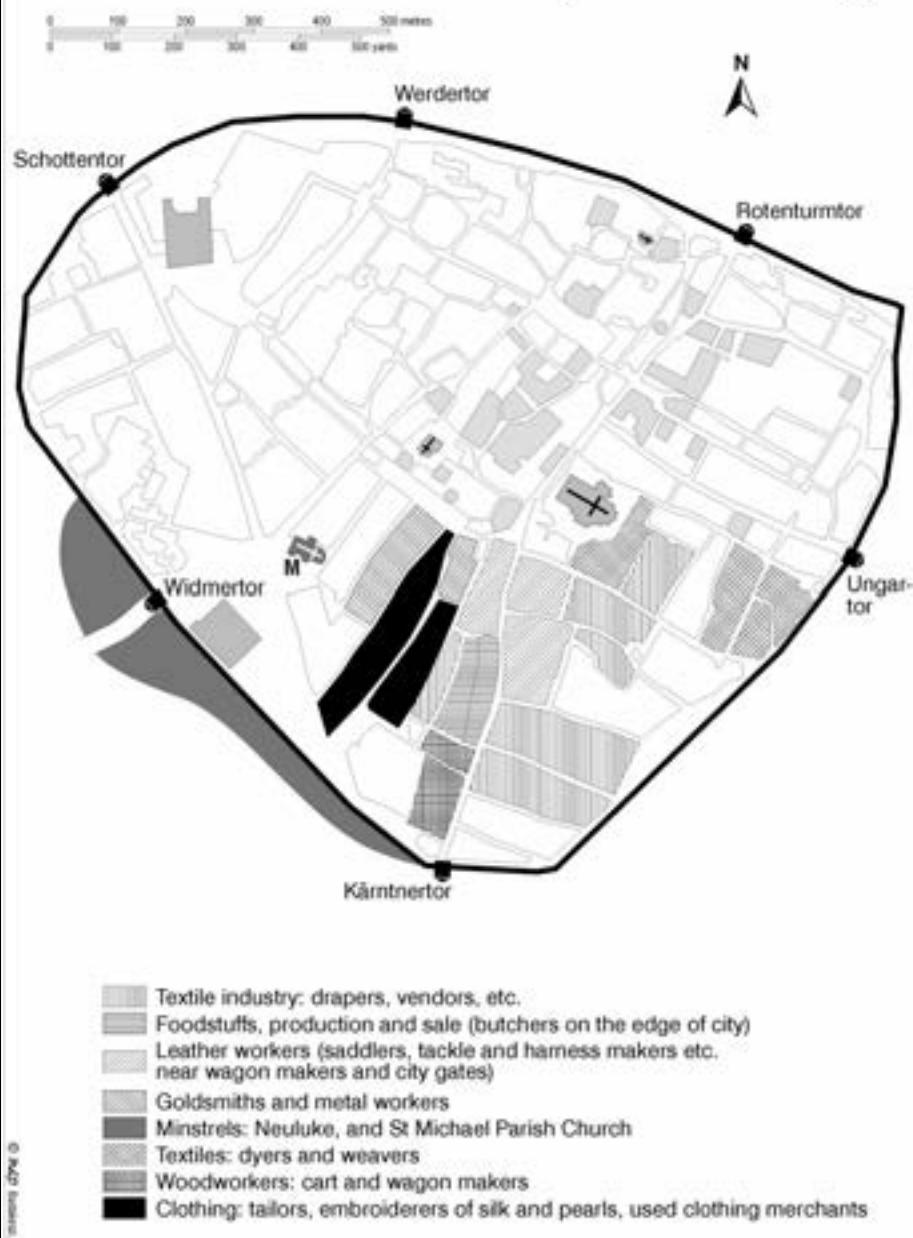
- 1 Wipplingerstrasse
- 2 Tuchlauben
- 3 Walknerstrasse
- 4 Fleischmarkt
- 5 Bäckerstrasse
- 6 Wollzeile
- 7 Schülerstrasse
- 8 Graben
- 9 Kärntnerstrasse
- 10 Laderstrasse
- 11 Färberstrasse
- 12 Kolhimarkt
- 13 Hochstrasse
- 14 Schaufelgasse

Churches and Squares

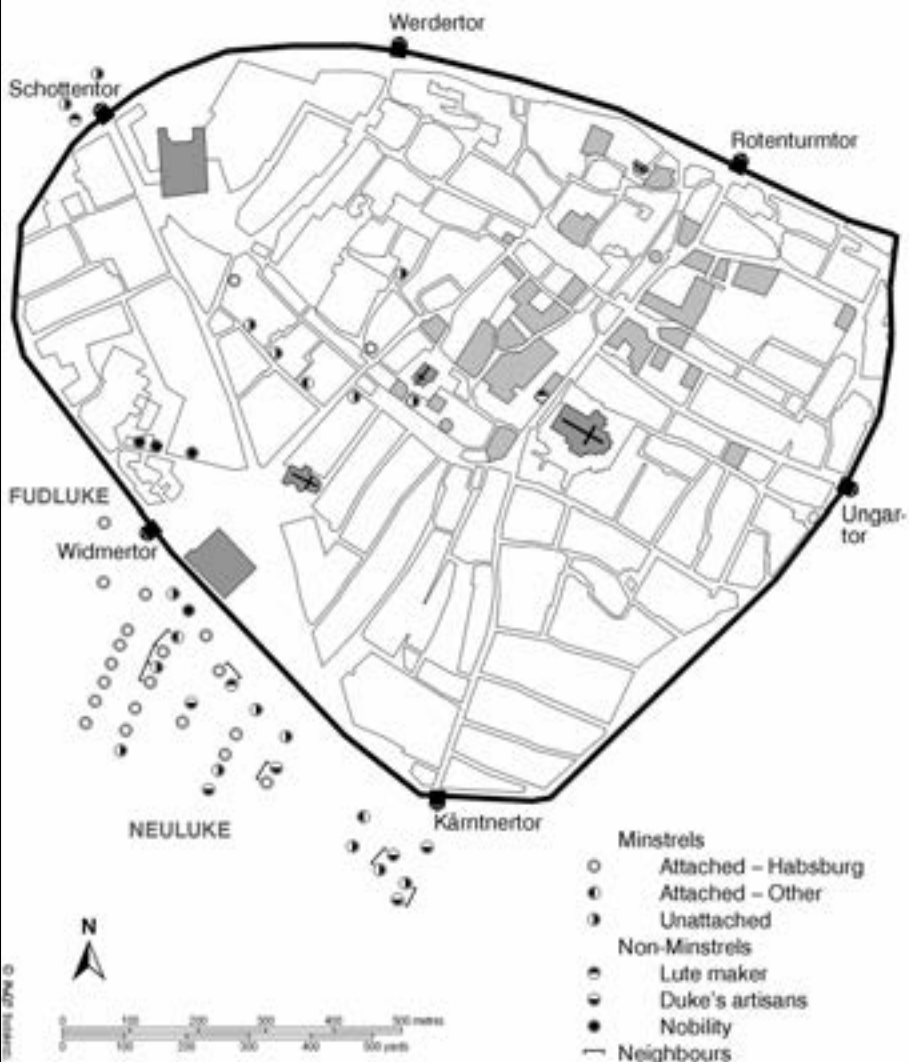
- F Freyung
- H Hof
- HM Hoher Markt
- J Judenplatz
- M St Michael
- NB Neue Burg
- NM Neuer Markt
- P St Peter
- R St Ruprecht
- S St Stephen
- SL Schaufelluke
- SM Scottish Monastery

Wealthy burgher residences

Appendix C: Distribution of Artisans in Vienna (Fourteenth Century)



Appendix D: Location of Minstrels in Vienna (Fourteenth Century)



Appendix E

Approximate List of Minstrels and their Locations in Vienna, Fourteenth Century

The following performers are listed in the land registers as owning houses or paying ground rents in Vienna.²

In the Neuluke district:

The following people worked for Duke Leopold III and then for Albrecht III who succeeded him in 1386. For those who left Neuluke and therefore probably Habsburg employ, the beginning and ending dates are given. I assume that those who lived in Neuluke until 1404 continued on with Duke Albrecht IV (1395–1404) and that those performers named under Albrecht V were already in his predecessor's employ although the land registers do not have enough information to know for certain.

Chunradus Wunderlein, drummer, 1371
 Eberhard, piper (or shawm player) to Duke Albrecht III, 1371
 Ewerl (Everli), piper, 1376–89
 Georg, pipe or shawm player, 1376–89
 Georius, drummer, 1376–1418
 Hans Dünn, trumpeter, 1390–1402
 Hans Tünn, horn player, 1390–1414
 Hans, drummer, 1390–1402
 Hans, lutenist and singer, 1390–1414
 Hans, horn player
 Hans von Neapel, trumpeter, 1390–1402
 Henne, pipe or shawm player, 1375–78
 Heinricus, drummer, 1376–89
 Heinz Pacher, piper, 1376–1402
 Johannes, piper to Leopold III 1339–79
 Jorig, drummer, 1382–1422
 Mert Pfeifer, pipe or shawm player, 1376–1402
 Nicol, horn player, 1376–1402
 Rueger, piper, 1376–1414
 Ulricus, piper, 1376–89
 Wolfhard Fürlein, piper, 1376–1418

Non-Habsburg domestics living in Neuluke:

Eberhard, piper of the duchess Beatrix of Nürnberg, 1379

² My list of minstrels mentioned in the Viennese land registers is compiled from Pietzsch, *Fürsten*, p. 129; Richard Müller, 'Entwicklung', II/1, pp. 140–44, 151–52; and Malecek, p. 7, all of whom examined the land registers thoroughly.

Johann the Piper, domestic of Lord von Kranichberg, (1370–73)

Unidentified musicians, that is, non-household minstrels or city servants living in Neuluke.

Putridus, fiddler, 1314

Heinricus, piper, 1376–89

Andre, trumpeter, 1390–1402

Gunther, piper, 1384

Hindersich, piper, 1376

Jakob, piper, 1390–1414

Jacob, drummer, 1377

Henricus, lutenist, 1366–76

Alternative districts where performers resided:

Walknerstrasse area

Eberhardus, piper, Strauchgasse, until 1368

Fiddler to the lord of Zelking, 1376–90

Wolfhard the lutenist and his wife Elisabeth, 1368–82.

Veleiz, piper, 1371–77 (His widows sells the house in 1382.)

Martin, fiddler, and his wife Margareta, until 1368

Albertus, piper, 1390

Peter Suchenwirt, poet-singer, 1380s

Outside the Schottentor:

Chunrad, fiddler, 1314–19

Petrus, piper, 1370s

Chunrad, lutemaker, 1375

Appendix F

Ordinance governing employment of municipal minstrels in Wismar, 1343

Anno domini MCCCXL Tercio In vigilia Purificacionis beate Marie virgnis Domini mei consules arbitrando statuerunt Quod Ciues nostri maiores siue diurnas nupcias celebrare volentes, dabunt vniciuique histrioni siue joculari, cum sollempnioribus ludis, vt sunt vedele, pype, Bunghe, Basvne, Rotte, vloghet eder Harpe, quem cum suo ludo ad seruendum sibi in nupciis conduxerint seu inuitauerint non magis quam Quator solidos lubicenses. Simili modo qui sibi in minoribus nupciis siue, serotenis conductus vel vocatus seruierit, illi dabit Duos solidos lubicenses. Si vero aliquis illorum pro tanto Ciuibus nostris seruire nollet, ille suam mansionem hic diucius habere non deberet. Vt autem ipsi cum dicto precio eo melius se possint sustentare dicti domini mei statuerunt, quod Ciues nostri nullos alios jocularos ad suas nupcias conducere debent preter illos qui hic in Ciuitate iacere solent, nisi forsan alios cum alio ludo habere vellet quam esset in Ciuitate habere non posset, vel saltem plures eiusdem ludi habere vellent. Item jocularos hic in Ciuitate jacere solentes quibus premissa datur libertas debent singulis diebus dominicis et festinis infra festa pasche et johannis quando domi fuerint Ciuibus nostris in Reseto de vespere seruire et ludos suos excercere. Quod si aliquis non faceret mansionem hic diucius habere non deberet.³

Key to musical instruments mentioned:

vedele = 'fiddle' or 'vielle'

pype = 'pipe' or 'shawm'

bunghe = 'one-sided or two-sided drum'

basune = 'horn'

rotte = 'crowd'

vloghet = 'flute'

³ Cited according to Burkhard Busse, 'Eine Ordnung für die Spielleute aus dem Jahre 1343 in Wismar', *Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft*, 3 (1961), 67–69 (pp. 67–68).

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